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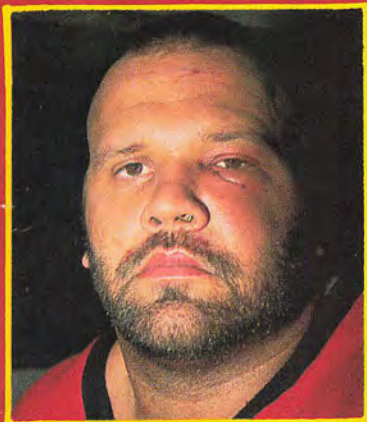
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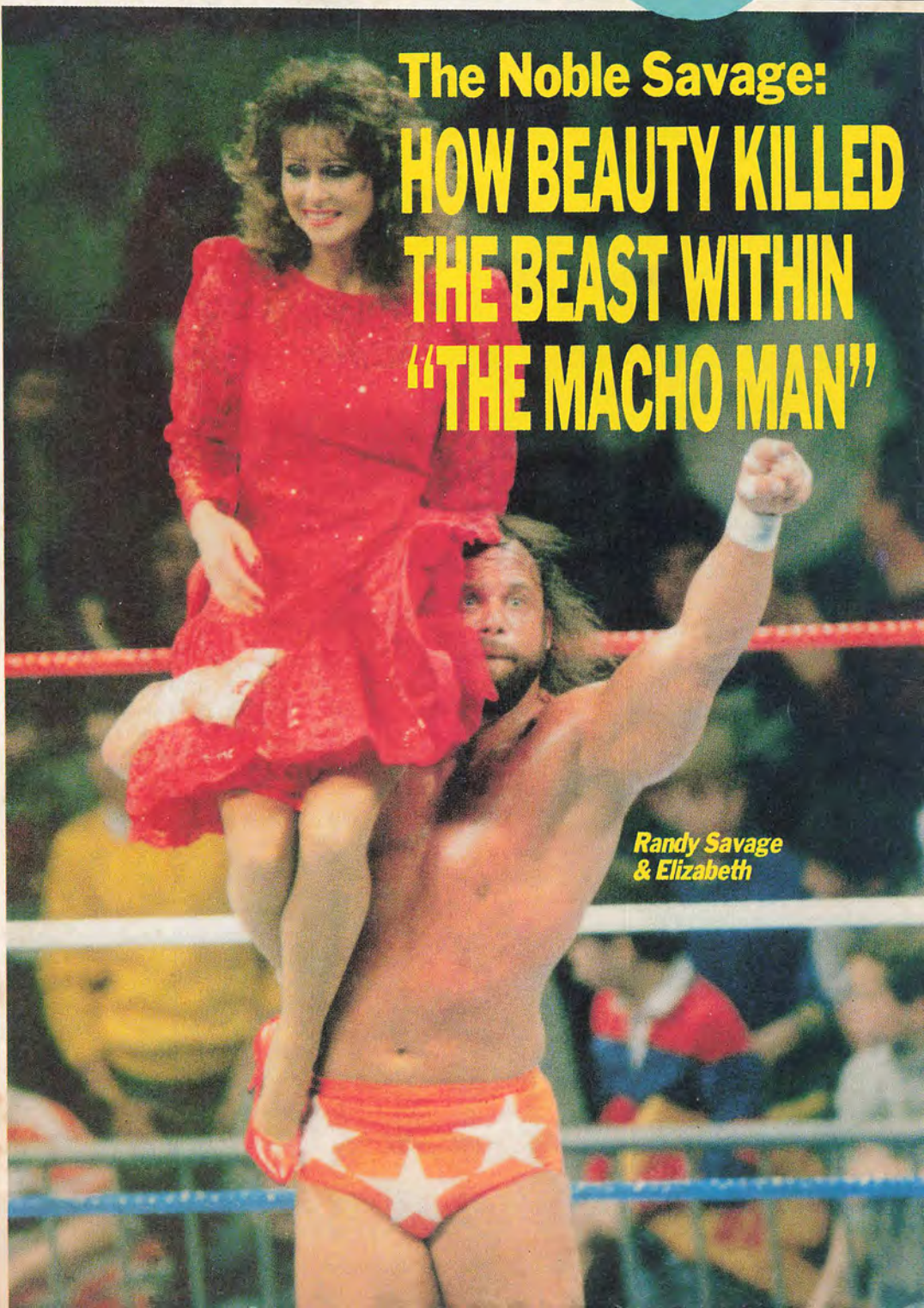
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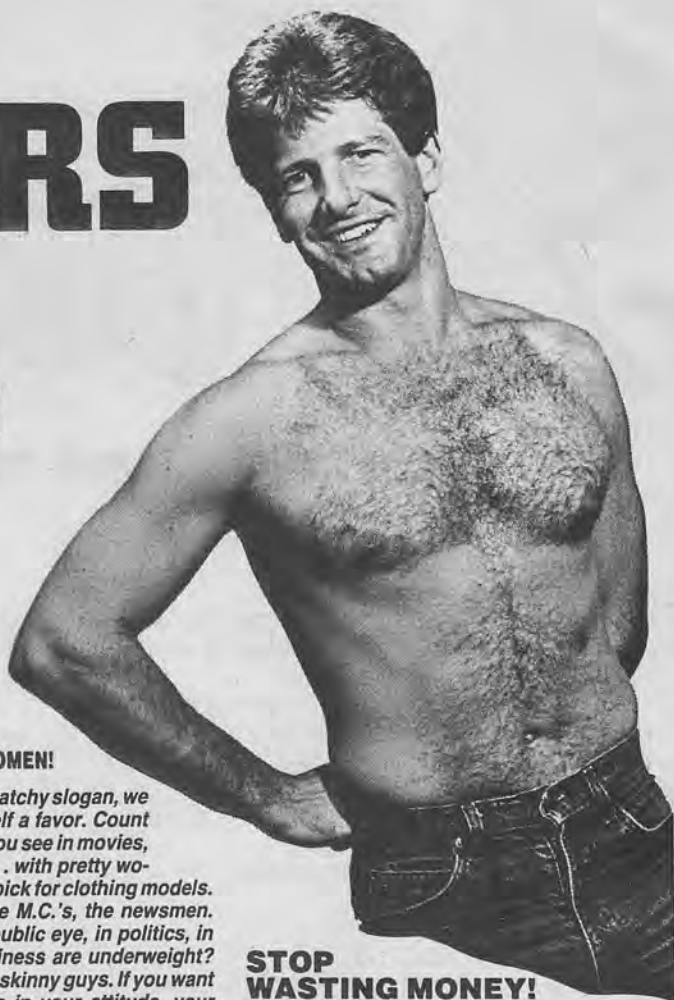
Skinny men are not great lovers. That's a known fact. Add a few pounds and you'll be amazed how it will improve your love-life. Women know this and are conscious of the fact that skinny men can't go the distance. The race is to the strong, the saying goes. And the fellow who is handsomest doesn't look like a stand-in for the family skeleton. Many a man found that gaining a few more pounds has helped him overcome chronic illness, major or minor. Many a doctor has prescribed gaining weight. But so little is publicized about skinny men. The great amount of publicity given to coronary problems has brought the bulk of weight attention to those men who weigh too much. Men who weigh too little never really get equal time. But their problem is no less serious.

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INSIDE

Wrestling

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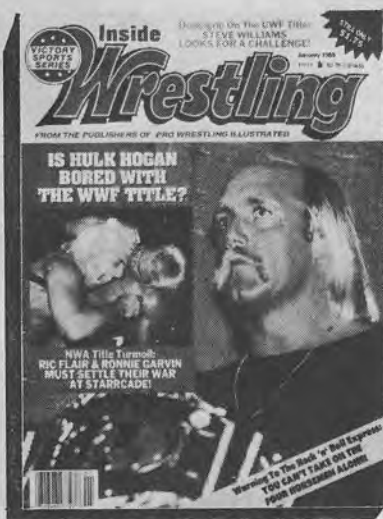
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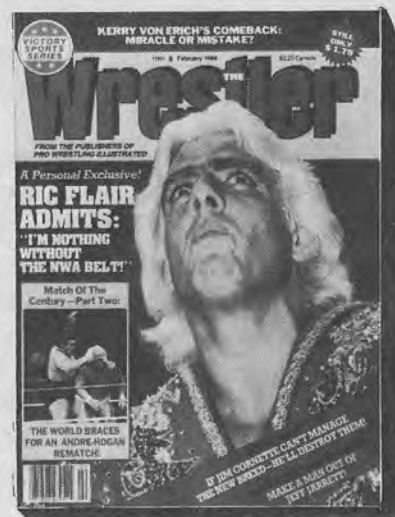
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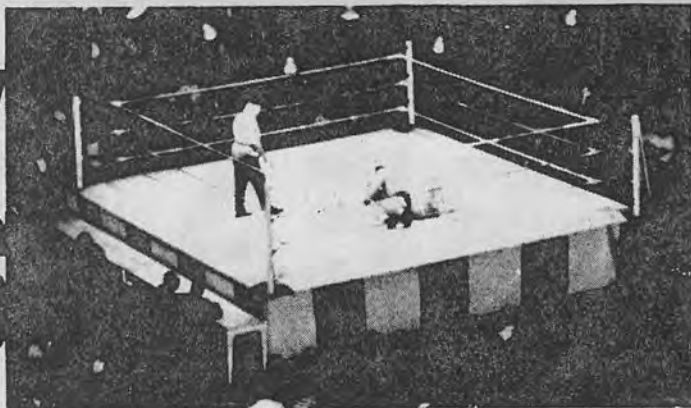
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MILLION-DOLLAR TALENT

The "Million-Dollar Man" Ted DiBiase is one of the greatest wrestlers of all time.

I think Ted knew that Vince McMahon would most likely give him a shot at Hulk Hogan and the WWF World title if he were not a "fan favorite." Whether or not you agree with him, you should respect the man for making not only the *right* decision, but the *only* one.

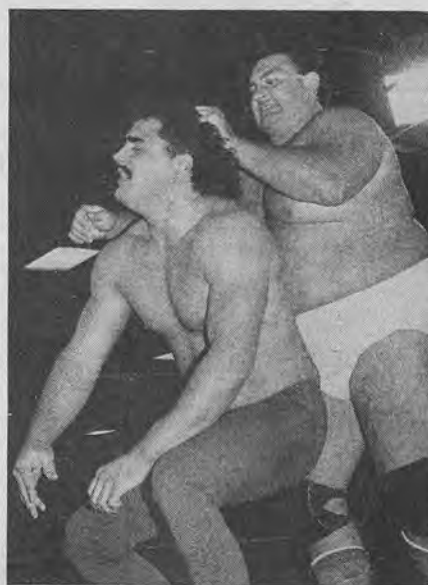
Ted has always been my favorite. He does not have to rely on one pinning maneuver, but can gain a pin by using a combination of moves.

Speaking of moves, last summer Ted and Chris Adams wrestled to a time-limit draw on the UWF television show. That match had my vote for Match of the Year; it was definitely the best match we UWF faithfuls will ever see.

DiBiase vs. Hogan is a great match. Ted has the wrestling advantage, while Hogan has the strength advantage. DiBiase, as I mentioned, pins with combinations. When was the last time you saw Hogan win with a set of scientific maneuvers? Ted can do more than Hogan's usual bodyslam, elbowsmash, and legdrop.

All in all, DiBiase is not a "bad" or a "good" guy, but a wrestler making a living the only way he can: in the WWF rulebreaker club to dethrone Hogan. Good job, Ted, and keep up the good work. No matter what, I will still think you are the greatest wrestler who ever lived.

KEVIN KIMBLE
Brookhaven, MS



Ted DiBiase (top, chinlocking Hulk Hogan) is admired by reader Kevin Kimble; Adrian Adonis (above, against Lance Allen) is hated by reader Bryan Hedrick.

ADONIS NO MORE

About a week ago I was watching AWA wrestling and out walks (or rolls) Adrian Adonis. This man is no more than a talking cow!

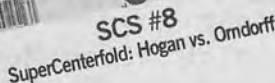
Let's go back in time about 10 years. I went to the wrestling matches each week in Amarillo, Texas. One week, a new wrestler came to the area: Adrian Adonis. Back then, Adrian offered \$10,000 to anyone who could beat him in 10 minutes. He kept his money. But now if he had that challenge, it would have to be to get Adrian up over your head and slam him to the mat. The best I can say to Adrian is: go to the fat farm.

C. BRYAN HEDRICK
Pampa, TX

(Continued on page 48)

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Stu
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Editor-in-Chief

I almost gagged when Dave Rosenbaum's "Behind The Dressing Room Door" popped up on my computer terminal for editing. If you're reading this first, turn to page 10 and then come back.

You might agree with everything he said; you might not. I will not sit here and tell you that Rosenbaum is wrong in his assessment of the WWF and its impact on wrestling, but I do think matters have to be put into their proper perspective.

Rosenbaum's perspective is that of precisely the type of person Vince McMahon is gearing his promotion to: someone who's impressed with glitz, hype, and rich people. He likes to be in the company of newspaper reporters, even if they're only at WWF press gatherings to eat Vince's food, drink his booze, and then write newspaper columns knocking his product. Rosenbaum isn't a lifelong wrestling fan; he became interested in the sport for professional reasons (it's his job). He doesn't have the love for the sport than many of us have. It doesn't worry him that the man he feels is gaining control of the sport doesn't have the best interests of the sport at heart.

I don't care how rich Vince McMahon is. I don't care how many yuppie fans he can get to watch WrestleMania IV on pay-per-view or how many high rollers he can squeeze into the choice seats at Atlantic City's Convention Center for the big event. I don't care about Donald Trump. The only thing that matters to me is that when the bell rings I see a top-notch, action-packed sporting event. WWF wrestling, for the most part, fits that description. But so does NWA wrestling, World Class wrestling, AWA wrestling, CWA wrestling, and so on.

From my perspective, when it comes down to what's really important, Vince McMahon is no better and no worse than anybody else.

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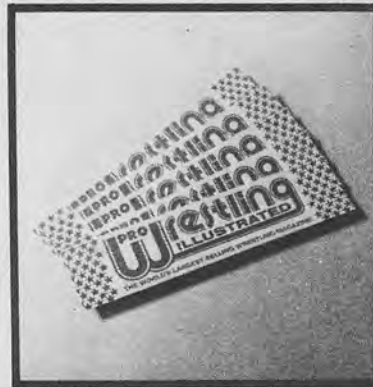
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Behind the Dressing Room Door

by **David
Rosenbaum**

WE'RE NOW WELL past the point where discussions about whether Vince McMahon Jr. is good or bad for wrestling really mean anything. Six years after the dawn of the McMahon era in this sport, two things are very obvious:

First of all, McMahon has turned himself into a very rich man by changing the nature of his organization. The hardline old-timers can cry and squawk all they want about how the WWF has turned into a circus and wrestling isn't like it used to be, but times change, people change, and the WWF has changed, too.

Second of all, like it or not, the WWF isn't going away. In fact, if you ask Vince McMahon, he'll tell you that his federation is going nowhere but into another stratosphere, far beyond its *wrestling* competition.

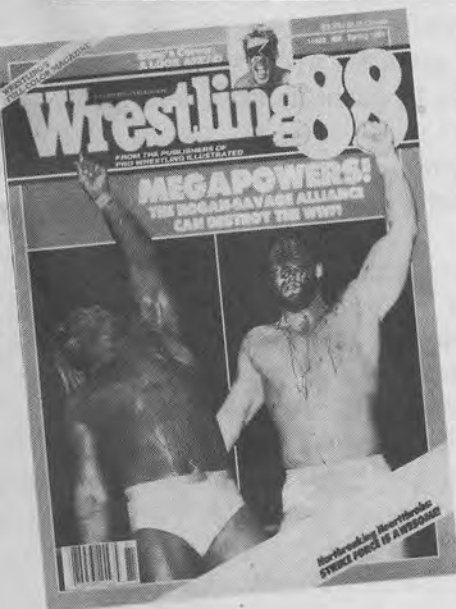
I say *wrestling* competition because it seems that McMahon doesn't consider the NWA or any other federation to be his main competitors. "If anybody is interested in the type of wrestling offered by the NWA, they'll watch them," McMahon said at a press conference for WrestleMania IV at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in New York City. "If anybody's interested in our brand of sports entertainment, they'll watch us.

"They [the NWA] have a small viewing universe compared to ours," McMahon continued. "Our competition is the other forms of entertainment. When we schedule a show for TV, I'm more concerned if there's a very good film being offered on, say, WTBS or the USA Network [than if the NWA has a wrestling card scheduled]. Our show on the USA Network [on January 24] had no im-

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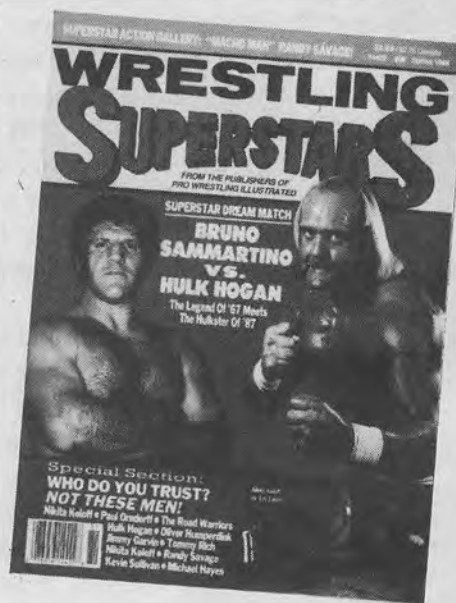
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THE NAME OF this column is "On The Road," and while I haven't actually been on the road a lot lately, there are a lot of wrestlers who seem to be on the road all the time. So much so that they haven't really settled down into any one area and established themselves over the past year or more.

These are the free agents of the sport, men who really don't want to be tied down to regular competition in the WWF or the NWA or the AWA or World Class—or *anywhere*. Men like Bruiser Brody, Stan Hansen, Sgt. Slaughter, Kamala, Abdullah the Butcher, David Shultz, and Tommy Rich. Any of these men is perfectly capable of dramatically affecting the balance of power in any federation in the country (imagine a series of bouts such as Hulk Hogan vs. Bruiser Brody, Tommy Rich vs. Ric Flair, or Stan Hansen vs. Curt Hennig!). Instead, they prefer to float from federation to federation, from the U.S. to Japan and back again, preferring to flaunt their independence more than they would any title.



Bruiser Brody

I managed to catch up with a few of these men to learn why they do what they do.

"I do what I want to do, not what some dip promoter tells me to do," growls Brody, who has spent the last year in Puerto Rico, Georgia, Missouri, and Japan. "The name of the game is independence and money. Hell, I earn more money in one month in Japan than most saps earn in the U.S. in a whole year. If I want to go to Japan, I go; if I want to come back to the States, I do that. I want to take a month off, I don't have to worry about promoters breathing down my neck about match contracts and all that crap. I'm my own man, and as far as I'm concerned, that's what counts most in this life."

Abdullah's situation is a different story completely.

"The problem with me is that most promoters in the United States will not sign me to wrestle in their arenas," Abdullah told me through his interpreter, Mr. Deepak. "I have tried to gain matches in most of the federations in the States, but there is too much fear. However, I do give credit to promoters in the National Wrestling Federation, International Championship Wrestling, and Southern Championship Wrestling promotions for having a small piece of courage in allowing me to wrestle. But that fear is why I have spent many months of my time in Japan and Puerto Rico."

Abdullah's banishment to Puerto Rico has, in one respect, paid off well: He recently captured the World Wrestling Council North American title from Miguel Perez Jr.

ON THE ROAD

with
CRAIG PETERS

"Hell, man, I'd love to come back and kick some butt in the World Class or the AWA," said Stan Hansen, who has spent most of the past year in Japan. Negotiations between Hansen and World Class, reported in the March 1988 edition of this space as being promising, have fallen through.

"Dang, though, the damn quality of the wrestling is so crappy I don't think there's a man alive in the States who could possibly make me break a good sweat. That's why I stay in Ja-

pan. These little creeps are speedy, they're scientific like all hell, and they give me a challenge. Like I said, I could go back to Minneapolis and wipe the mat with Curt Hennig, take the belt again, but where would I go from there? Pitiful. Give me Japan, sushi, and a good geisha, and I'm set, brother."

On the whole, it seems that most of the "free agent" wrestlers are doing exactly what they want to be doing in this sport.

The flip side of the situation is that promoters in the small regional areas of the country have a chance to sign some of the biggest names in the sport.

"The free agents are an incredible asset to the sport," said ICW promoter Mario Savoldi, who has signed matches involving such names as Slaughter, Shultz, Brody, Abdullah, and—before they settled down in the World Class area and moved on to the NWA—The Fantastics.

"These men, willing to travel anywhere, who have independence on their minds, allow a promoter like me to bring top-name talent, stars that aren't tied down to a major promotion full time, to the fans.

"Also, a lot of the independent circuit is comprised of up-and-coming young men who are trying to find out whether they have what it takes to make it in the sport as a career. Some of them don't, and they find out quickly. Others have a chance, and when a guy like Slaughter or Shultz comes along, they can test themselves against an established talent.

"Too many fans look at an independent promotion and think there's nothing there," Savoldi said, "but nothing could be further from the truth. The independents have a lot to offer the fans, and I think the sport is in a situation today where more and more fans are beginning to realize it. Certainly more and more big names are taking to the independent circuit as a way of maintaining their own independence, and I think that's great. In the end, it's the fans who win out in something like this."

Men like Brody and Hansen may be looking out for number one—themselves—but it's the fans who are coming out ahead. And anytime the fans are coming out ahead in this sport, that's a good sign *something* is going right. □

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NAMES MAKING

The third annual \$1 million Jim Crockett Sr. Memorial Cup tag team tournament will be just days away when this issue hits the newsstands, so what better time to look at how the 1988 tourney—scheduled for April 22 in Greenville, South Carolina, and April 23 in Greensboro, North Carolina—shapes up.

At press time, the NWA tag team situation is in turmoil. **The Rock 'n' Roll Express** left for the CWA in late January and probably won't return to the NWA. **The Road Warriors**, who won the inaugural Crockett Cup in 1986, are suffering as **Animal** is sidelined with a severe eye injury. **The Superpowers** won last year's cup, but **Nikita Koloff** has taken a leave of absence to travel the U.S. on an anti-drug tour and may not have returned to competition by tournament seeding time.

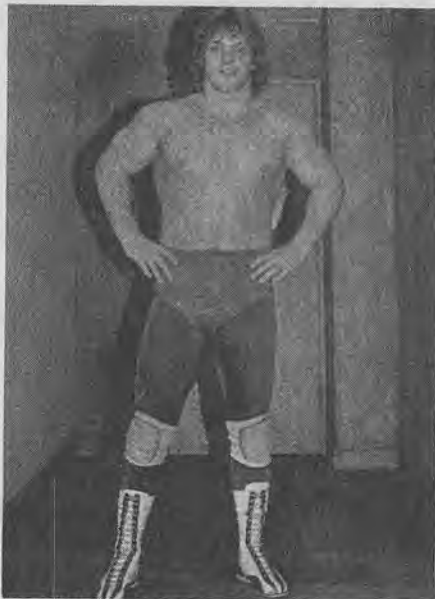
That leaves NWA World tag team champions **Tully Blanchard** and **Arn Anderson** as probable co-favorites along with U.S. tag champs **Bobby Eaton** and **Stan Lane**. **Paul Jones'** team of **The Barbarian** and **The**



BLANCHARD & ANDERSON

Warlord have emerged as a dangerous duo as well, but who's left among the fan favorite teams? Possibly **Dusty Rhodes** and **Lex Luger**, who have teamed successfully over the past month. Right now, the balance of power in the tourney depends on **Animal's** injury. If he comes back, The Warriors are the team to beat. Otherwise, it's anybody's tournament.

Sheik Adnan Al-Kalssie has resumed his feud with **Baron Von Raschke** in the AWA... **Johnny Smith** and **Chris Benoit**, tag partners in the Stampede area, appear to be on



CHRIS BENOIT

the verge of a breakup. During a match against **The Midnight Cowboys**, Smith feigned injury and left the ring while Benoit got beaten up. More on this next month... **Rick Patterson** and **Steve Ray**, a popular new tag team in the World Wrestling Alliance, are scheduled for a series of matches against **David** and **Larry Power**. **The Power Twins** were trained by **David Shultz**. Patterson and **Mike Stone** were stripped of the Central States tag belts when Stone left the



JERRY LAWLER

area and no defense was made during the mandatory 30-day period.

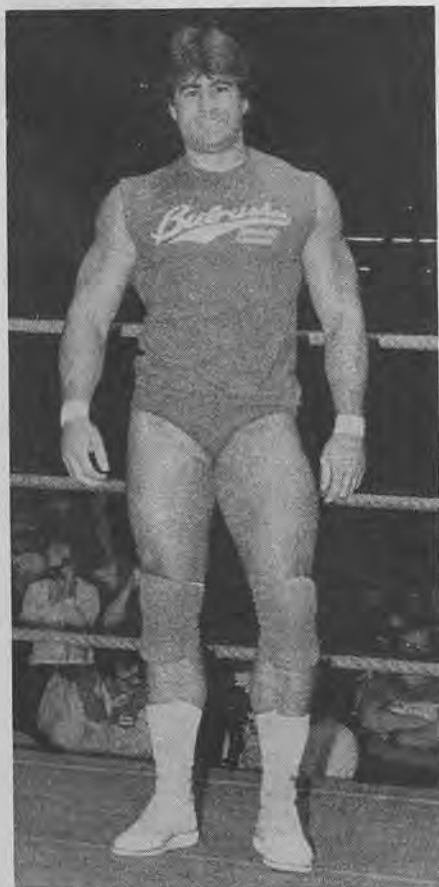
Jerry Lawler's career is in danger because of damage to his left eye sustained during a match against **Tommy Rich** on February 22 in Memphis. Lawler, the CWA heavyweight champion, was blinded in the left eye and suffered severe burns when **Eddie Gilbert** ran into the ring and threw fire in his face.

During the match, Eddie's younger brother **Doug Gilbert** interfered and helped Rich piledrive Lawler twice. CWA promoter **Eddie Marlin** ordered Doug out of the ring, but **Tommy Gilbert**, father of Doug and Eddie and a former UWF referee, started arguing with Marlin. Tommy slugged Marlin and Eddie Gilbert ran in the ring. Eddie tossed fire in Lawler's face and fled to the dressing room with his father and brother.

Two days prior to this incident, Eddie's wife **Missy Hyatt** appeared on CWA TV and introduced Doug as her bodyguard. Missy avoided questions

concerning her husband, but it was learned afterward that Eddie was headed into the area. Missy and Eddie were a notorious duo in the UWF before that federation was merged with the NWA. Gilbert, who once admitted that Lawler was his boyhood idol, started his career in the Mid-Southern area as Lawler's protege before the two began feuding in early 1985.

Stampede North American champion **Owen Hart**, back once again from a tour of Japan, is feuding with **Makhan Singh** ... Rumors have circulated that WWF commentator **Jesse The Body** Ventura will work periodically as a guest commentator on New York Yankee baseball telecasts during the 1988 season ... This just in: **Tom Zenk** has left the AWA for undisclosed reasons. Zenk, formerly of **The Can-**



TOM ZENK

Am Connection in the WWF with **Rick Martel**, had hoped to challenge for the AWA World heavyweight title.

The AWA World title was held up in the Pacific Northwest area following a match in Portland, Oregon, between champion **Curt Hennig** and PNW champ **The Grappler**. Grappler



THE GRAPPLER

kicked Hennig in the stomach while referee **Sandy Barr** wasn't looking and covered him for the pin. PNW official **Barry Owen** stopped Barr from making the three-count, then explained to him what happened. Meanwhile, **The Assassin** entered the ring and headbutted Grappler with a loaded mask. Hennig covered Grappler for the pin and appeared to have retained the belt. But promoter **Don Owen** revealed that he was under orders from AWA President **Stanley Blackburn** to stop the match and hold up the title if there was any outside interference.

Midget star **Little Road Warrior** is locked in a feud with **Little Bad John**—who isn't a midget—in the

Mid-Continental area, an independent promotion operating in Kentucky; **"Handsome" Jimmy Ackers** manages John ... NWA TV and Florida champion **Mike Rotundo** gave his Florida belt to **Rick Steiner** under orders from **Kevin Sullivan**. Steiner is only defending the belt for Rotundo, who remains the recognized champion. It's unclear whether the NWA, currently looking into the matter, will allow this to continue.

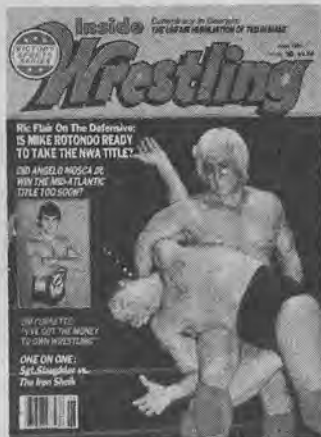
World Wrestling Council Universal champion **Carlos Colon** suffered a shock on February 13 in Puerto Rico when he lost his title to **Hercules Ayala** in a controversial match. **Chicky Starr**, Ayala's manager, handed a Hercules a foreign object. Ayala then slugged Colon and covered him for the pin. "I was robbed," said a despondent Colon. "I can't believe the WWF would allow this decision to stand!"

That's all for now, fans! See you at the matches! □



CARLOS COLON

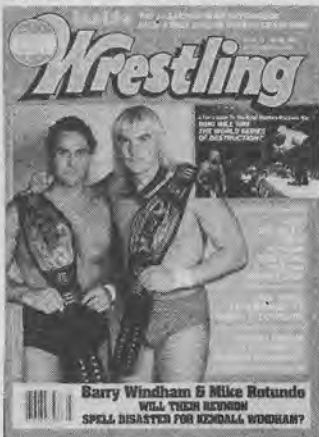
September 1983/Stories include: Zbyszko, Piper, Andre, Hayes.
October 1983/Stories include: Wrestling II, Backlund, Junkyard Dog, Rhodes.
November 1983/Stories include: Hogan, Reed, Von Erich, Dillon.
December 1983/Stories include: Von Erich, Samoans, Valiant, Road Warriors.
March 1984/Stories include: Junkyard Dog, Rich, Rhodes, Garvin.
April 1984/Stories include: Flair, Steamboat, Superstar, Windham.
May 1984/Stories include: Iron Sheik, Steamboat, Rotundo, Von Erich.



JUNE 1984

June 1984/Stories include: Flair, Slaughter, Cornette, DiBiase.
July 1984/Stories include: Valiant, Flair, Martel, Wrestling II.
August 1984/Stories include: Junkyard Dog, Magnum T.A., Idol, Spoiler.
September 1984/Stories include: Martel, Brody, Von Erich, Iron Sheik.
October 1984/Stories include: Billy Jack, Road Warriors, Steamboat, Piper.
November 1984/Stories include: Rhodes, Rich, Hernandez, Warriors.
December 1984/Stories include: Hogan, Warriors, Sullivan, Magnum T.A.
January 1985/Stories include: Magnum T.A., Rhodes, Atlas, Von Erich.
February 1985/Stories include: Rich, Adams, Valiant, Flair.
March 1985/Stories include: Backlund, Billy Jack, Koloffs, Von Erichs.

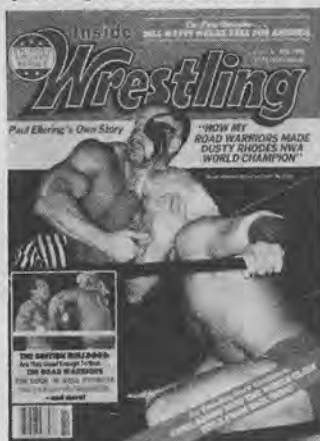
April 1985/Stories include: Warriors, Albano & Hogan, Steamboat, Gordy.
May 1985/Stories include: Slaughter, Garvin, Albano, Koloffs.
June 1985/Stories include: Warriors, Slaughter, Von Erichs, Studd & Patena.
July 1985/Stories include: Hogan, Von Erich, Nikita, Warriors.
August 1985/Stories include: Wrestlemania, Zbyszko vs. The Tonga Kid.
September 1985/Stories include: Piper, Flair, Fantastics, Magnum T.A.
October 1985/Stories include: Russian menace, Von Erichs, Rude & Barr.
November 1985/Stories include: Steamboat, Adams, Freebirds, Cornette.
December 1985/Stories include: Santana, Brody, Andersons, Murdoch.
January 1986/Stories include: Steamboat, Mike Von Erich, Warriors.
February 1986/Stories include: R'n'R Express, Warriors, Mulligan & Windham.



MARCH 1986

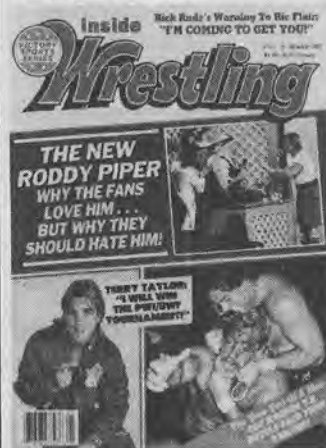
March 1986/Stories include: Windham & Rotundo, Warriors-Russians, Rude.
April 1986/Stories include: Scott Hall, Rhodes, Flair, Andre, Bill Watts.
May 1986/Stories include: Randy Savage, Stan Hansen, Rock 'n' Rolls.
June 1986/Stories include: Bulldogs, Windham-Flair, Lance Von, Blanchard.
July 1986/All-American Special Issue. Stories include: Hogan, Slaughter, T.A.
August 1986/Stories include: Wrestlemania 2, Garvins, Martel, Fab Ones.

September 1986/Stories include: Andre, Rhodes-T.A., Adams, Windham.
October 1986/Stories include: Flair-Luger, Savage, Fantastics, Warriors.



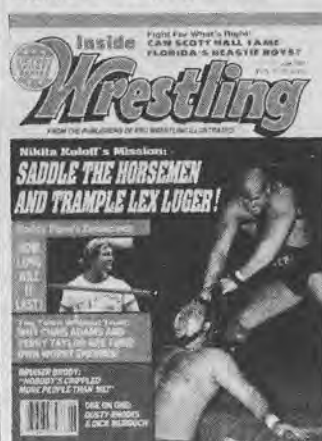
NOVEMBER 1986

November 1986/Stories include: Warriors-Flair, Bulldogs, Watts, Adams.
December 1986/Stories include: Hogan-Adonis, R&R Express, Baby Doll.
January 1987/Stories include: Rude-Flair, Piper, T.A., Taylor.



JANUARY 1987

February 1987/Stories include: Hogan-Piper-Orndorff, Taylor, Flair.
March 1987/Stories include: Flair, Missy, Luger, Bulldogs, Koloffs.
April 1987/Stories include: Windham, Steamboat, Ellering, Duggan.
May 1987/Stories include: Windham & Luger, Steamboat, Hogan-Andre.



JUNE 1987

June 1987/Stories include: Piper-Adonis, Horsemen, Adams, Hall, Brody.
July 1987/Stories include: Danny Davis, DiBiase, Rockers, Rotundo, Andersons.
August 1987/Stories include: Dusty & Nikita, Hogan, Mike Von, Cornette.
September 1987/Stories include: Hogan-Race, R&R Exp., Rich, Honky Tonk.
October 1987/Stories include: R&R Express, Hogan, Taylor-Adams, Lawler.
November 1987/Stories include: War Games, Mr. T, Bulldogs, Rhodes.
December 1987/Stories include: Freebirds, Rhodes, Magnum, Savage, Perez.
January 1988/Stories include: R&R-Horsemen, Hogan, Flair-Garvin.
February 1988/Stories include: Savage, Kevin Von, Sting, Tully & Arn.
March 1988/Stories include: Bigelow, Adams, Koloff, Honky Tonk, Freebirds.
April 1988/Stories include: Luger-Flair, Ultimate Warrior, Andre-Hogan-DiBiase.
May 1988/Stories include: Zbyszko, DiBiase, Warriors, Rockers, Fritz Von.

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THE

INSIDER

By Eddie Ellner

[The opinions expressed in "The Insider" are those of Eddie Ellner alone, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of anyone else on the staff of this magazine.]

INITIAL REACTION TO the Hulk Hogan/Andre the Giant Idiot title mess:

The loss effectively ends any chance Hogan had of eclipsing Bruno Sammartino's record for longest WWF title reign (7½ years). Even if he regains the title at WrestleMania IV, he will not hold it longer than Bob Backlund (5½ years). Thus, the eyes of history will regard the bald-headed, sickly skinned, loud-mouthed bimbo as the *third* best WWF champion of all time—a dubious honor for a federation barely 25 years old. Rarely does history portray events with such accuracy.

Now, if someone can explain the logic of Jack Tunney's decision regarding the disputed title belt. If Ted DiBiase's attempt to purchase the WWF belt was voided, why doesn't the same sanction apply to Andre's attempt to sell it? If Andre's attempt to sell the title was voided, he would still be champion. Instead, Tunney, after much hedging, ruled the entire transaction illegal and stripped Andre of the crown. Shouldn't the belt, if the match broke every rule in the book, be restored to Hogan?

But if Hogan reclaimed the title, there would be no need for this elimination title tournament, conveniently scheduled for WrestleMania IV. If you don't think this is an extraordinary string of coincidences, I don't either. The WWF doesn't have time to think: They're too busy counting the re-

ceipts from March 27.

What, if anything, does Andre's victory mean? Let us first establish what it *doesn't* prove.

- It doesn't prove Andre is human. There is a long history of aliens attempting to deceive earthlings. It happens all the time—just watch any *Twilight Zone*.

- It doesn't prove Andre is a better wrestler than Hogan. Wrestling against The Giant Idiot is like being forced to kiss your boss's ugly daughter—you have no choice but to do it, although you may not give it your best shot.

What the victory *does* mean:

- That Hogan is incredibly stupid to believe DiBiase bribed the imposter Hebner into plastic surgery to alter his looks to match those of the real Hebner. That the two refs are twins should be common knowledge to most serious wrestling fans.

- That Jack Tunney has proven conclusively he is more puppet than president, incapable of making forceful decisions. An appropriate sentence for Tunney would be 30 days in Matilda's doghouse.

- On March 27, Vince McMahon will discover himself a much richer man than he already is. And the condition of professional wrestling as we know it will move one step closer to oblivion.

NEWS ITEM: The Rock 'n' Roll Express Heads For Memphis

When the Rock n' Roll Express were NWA champions (funny, it doesn't seem all that long ago), and I condemned them to hell for being soulless, skillless, and worthless chunks of plastic flesh, I was

(Continued on page 52)



Andre the Giant chokes Hulk Hogan as imposter referee Earl Hebner tells him to break the hold. Andre's victory over Hogan proves little, Eddie Ellner writes.



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A—ON— ASSIGNMENT

BY LIZ HUNTER

Before a recent card at Long Island's Nassau Coliseum, NWA superstars Lex Luger and Sting visited the offices of *Inside Wrestling* for interviews and photographs. Liz Hunter was on hand to record the event.

"NO PICTURES, NO pictures now," cries Lex Luger as I aim my camera at him. "I'm not pumped enough yet." Talk about a straight line. I am trailing Luger and Sting through the Sportset Fitness and Racquetball club. Activity in the club has stopped dead as staff and club members stare at the twin towers of sinew and muscle.

"You may look but you may not touch," Luger cautions one anxious young girl. "You may break something you can't afford to replace!" he adds with a chuckle.

Luger and Sting are a study in contrasts. Sting attempts to keep a low profile, although that make-up and a 6'2", 260-pound frame tend to heap attention his way. He is silent during his sets of benchpresses, his bulging muscles making all the noise.

Luger, on the other hand, is quite elated with himself. "Have you ever seen a body like this before?" he asks his reflection in the mirror. "Am I the most awesome thing on two feet?"

Luger is awesome, although one wishes he wouldn't remind us of it so often. I suppose being a perfect physical specimen—which, all kidding aside, Luger is—must take its toll.



Lex Luger and Sting vie for the "Future World Champion" trophy. According to Liz Hunter, Luger easily surpasses Sting in the ego department.

Back in the office, Luger demands a rubdown before being photographed. I volunteer for the job, but Luger insists Administrative Vice President Donna Cricchio, on hand this Sunday to attack a growing mound of important paperwork on her desk, must do the job. Donna declines.

"Don't look at it as a massage," Luger coos. "Think of it as an opportunity to touch the world's most perfect man."

I feel like I'm at a singles' bar. In the end, Luger goes unrubbed,

thus saving Donna's marriage but annoying "The Total Package."

"She's a weird chick, that one," Luger says. "Imagine passing up the opportunity to rub down Lex Luger."

I detect a problem. Here is a man clearly choking on his own press clippings. After nearly a year in the company of The Four Egomaniacal Horsemen, Lex Luger believes his own legend. A very dangerous position.

I pulled out of my files an interview he gave me during his rookie year in Florida. Here is an excerpt:

HUNTER: I heard all those girls at ringside call you "Hercules." Does the cheering inspire you in the ring?

LUGER: Oh, without a doubt. You try to do your best out there. Knowing people appreciate the hard work you put in makes you go the extra mile.

HUNTER: You have been called the man with the greatest physique in the sport. What do you think of that?

LUGER: I put in my time like anyone else. My goal is to someday be NWA World champion. I know in order to achieve that I must work very hard. They don't hand out titles for good looks.

HUNTER: If they did, you'd certainly have them all.

LUGER: That's very nice of you, Liz. But I'm a wrestler, not a pretty boy. Everyone should understand that.

In the office, I asked Luger if he

(Continued on page 53)

THE VIDEOTAPE EVENT OF THE YEAR!



Slant-Eyed Slaughter

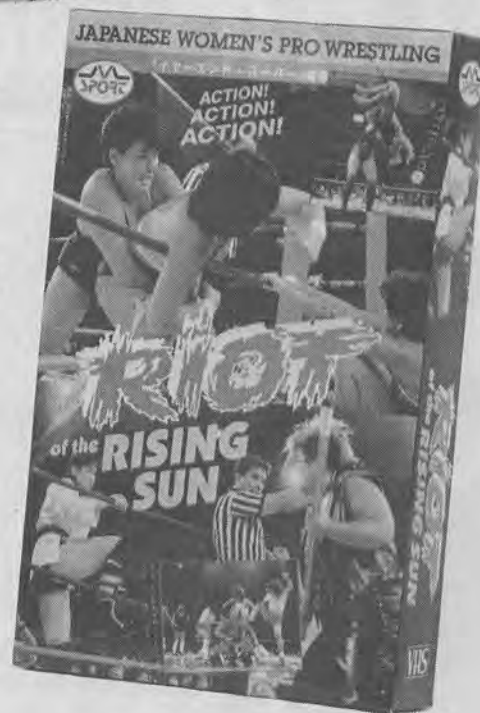
(running time: approximately 70 minutes)

- Wendi Richter & "Devil" Masami vs. Ayumi "Jumbo" Hori & Okumura
- Nancy Kumi vs. Lucy Kayama
- Monster Ripper & "Devil" Masami vs. Ayumi "Jumbo" Hori & Mimi Hagiwara
- "Jaguar" Rimi Yokota vs. Tarantula
- "Crush Girl" Lioness Asuka vs. "Crush Girl" Chigusa Nagayo

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Riot Of The Rising Sun

(running time: approximately 70 minutes)

- Yukari Omori & Ayumi "Jumbo" Hori vs. Noriyo Tateno & Itysuki Yamasaki—"The Jumping Bomb Angels"
- Masked You & Kaoru "Dump" Matsumoto vs. Lioness Asuka & Chigusa Nagayo—"The Crush Girls"
- "Jaguar" Rimi Yokota vs. Las Galactia
- "Jaguar" Rimi Yokota vs. "Devil" Masami

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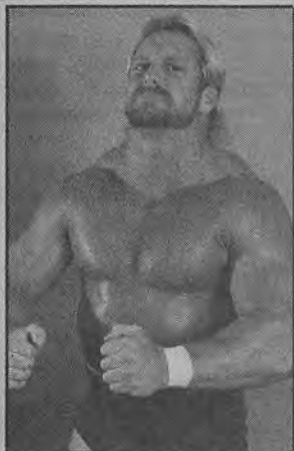


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WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

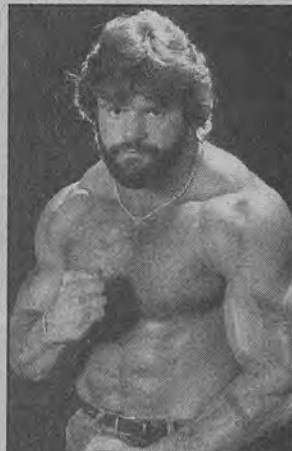
Do you have a favorite wrestler who has left your area? Are you wondering where he is today? Then this special column is just for you. Each month we will update the whereabouts of four current or former wrestlers



ED "THE BULL" GANTNER

After several serious ring injuries and a breakdown in contract negotiations with the NWA, Gantner moved to Colorado, where he has secured an executive position with a leading automobile firm. Gantner, a hated

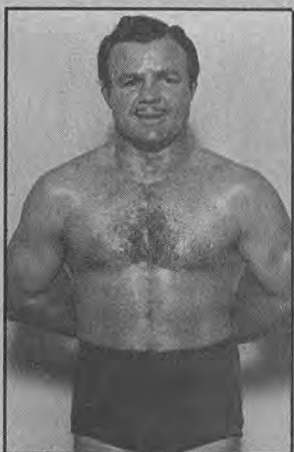
star in Florida under the management of Sir Oliver Humperdink, still hopes to come back and run Barry Windham out of the sport. "As long as he's around, I'm not gonna sleep easy," said Gantner.



BILLY JACK HAYNES

The former Pacific Northwest heavy-weight champion has returned to his home in Portland, Oregon, after repeated requests for a shot at the WWF World title didn't pan out.

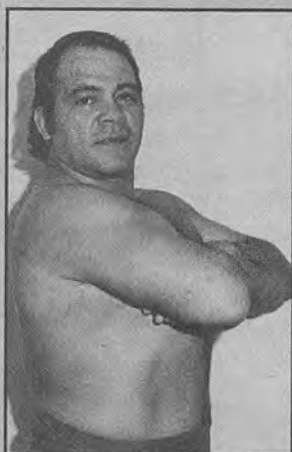
Haynes, a massive muscleman, has decided to enter wrestling promotion and hopes to run several shows a year in the Pacific Northwest area. At press time, Haynes was busy trying to sign talent, and has not yet ruled out a return to the ring.



DANNY McSHANE

"Dangerous" Danny, probably the roughest man in Texas wrestling during the late 1950s and early '60s, is now 75 years old and living in Pearland, Texas, with his wife. Upon his retirement in the mid-'60s,

McShane became a referee for several years. He then opened a successful real estate business, but sold his interest in it several years ago. McShane recently has had problems with his hip and a bout with a double hernia.



JOSE LOTHARIO

One of the sport's most popular stars ever, Lothario is now retired and has two part-time jobs. He trains young wrestlers who are hoping to enter the pro ranks, and is also the maitre d' at one of San Antonio, Texas', finest Mexican

restaurants. "I enjoy working with youngsters," said Lothario. "There's some fine young talent out there and it's fun to watch these kids develop. The restaurant business can also be very rewarding."

INSIDE WRESTLING

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CAPSULE PROFILE

PERHAPS THE MOST famous member of Texas' wrestling Von Erchs, Kerry long ago established himself as a genuine superstar (*"I feel like I've done a lot for this sport"*) ... Wrestled his first pro match in 1978—while he was still in high school (*"I couldn't wait to get started"*) ... Refused to accept payment, enabling him to keep his amateur status for track and field ... An outstanding discus thrower, Kerry had hopes of making the Olympic team in 1980, but turned to the pro ring when the U.S. boycotted the Moscow games (*"I decided I couldn't remain an amateur athlete until 1984"*) ... Some early titles included the Florida and North American heavyweight belts, as well as the American and WWC tag titles ... Established a reputation as a "giant killer" by slamming superheavyweights like Crusher Blackwell and Kamala (*"Even guys that big can be had"*) ... Held World Class Texas and American titles on several occasions ... Defeated Harley Race in January 1983 for the Missouri title (*"That was my first really big victory"*) ... That same year, became involved in a long feud with The Fabulous Freebirds ... With brothers David and Kevin, traded the World Class six-man tag team title with the 'Birds throughout most of 1983 (*"I'll never trust The Freebirds for any-*

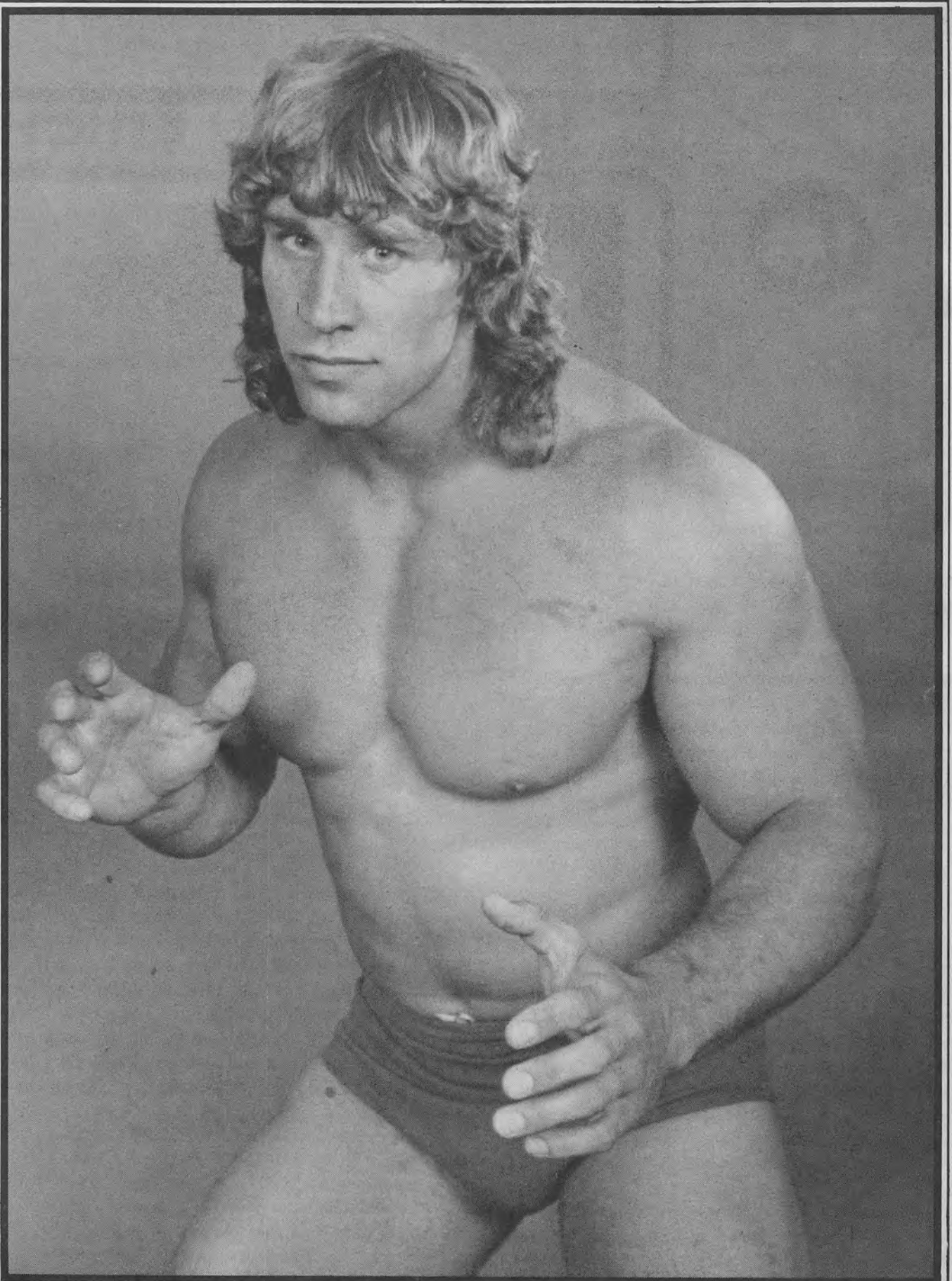
KERRY VON ERICH



Kerry Von Erich prepares to put the iron claw on Al Perez. Fully recovered from his motorcycle accident, Kerry is now a top contender for Perez's World Class title.

thing") ... David's death in February 1984 inspired Kerry to rededicate himself to winning the NWA World title ... On May 6, 1984, in front of 43,517 fans at Texas Stadium, Kerry defeated Ric Flair to win the title (*"It was David's moment as much as it was mine"*) ... Lost the belt 18 days later to Flair in Japan (*"No excuses; Flair is an excellent wrestler"*) ... Won the six-man title with brothers Kevin and Mike, then with Kevin and Brian Adias while Mike recovered from a serious illness (*"We kept it going because we cared so much about Mike"*) ... Lost the American title to Chris Adams in February 1985 (*"It's funny with Chris; we've been friends and we've been enemies"*) ... His career came to a sudden halt in June 1986

when he suffered a terrible motorcycle accident (*"Considering all the things that have happened to our family, I felt very fortunate to have survived"*) ... Tried to return to the ring against Brian Adias in February 1987, but re-injured his ankle in the attempt (*"I was so anxious to come back, I didn't wait long enough for the ankle to heal"*) ... A few days before his official comeback, joined Kevin to beat Adias and Frank Lancaster for the World Class tag team title (*"I was ready and I proved it"*) ... Kerry's comeback was complete when he pinned Adias on Thanksgiving Day in Dallas, and he says he's gunning for Al Perez's World Class heavyweight belt (*"I'm stronger and better than I've ever been"*) □



KERRY VON ERICH

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SAN FRANCISCO, CA By Jason Singh



**ULTIMATE WARRIOR
vs.
HARLEY RACE**



The match started with the Warrior gaining the advantage with several clotheslines, knocking Race out of the ring. Warrior followed Race outside and hit "The King" with the ring announcer's microphone. Finally, when the action returned to the ring, Race got the edge and went to the top rope. He executed a flying bodypress, but the Warrior was waiting: He caught Race, flipped him over, and scored the pin.

OTHER BOUTS: The Jumping Bomb Angels defeated The Glamour Girls ... Don Muraco beat Butch Reed ... Hack-saw Duggan & Ken Patera defeated Demolition & Mr. Fuji ... Ted DiBiase beat George Steele ... Hercules Hernandez beat Hillbilly Jim ... Jake Roberts and One Man Gang were both counted out.

PITTSBURGH, PA By Dean Grande



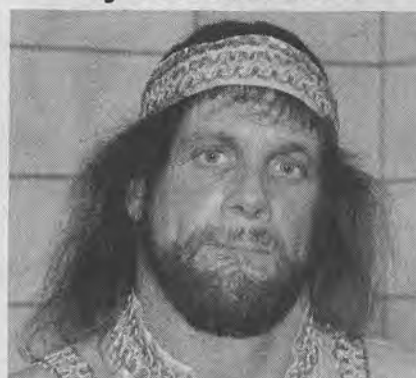
**RIC FLAIR
vs.
STING**



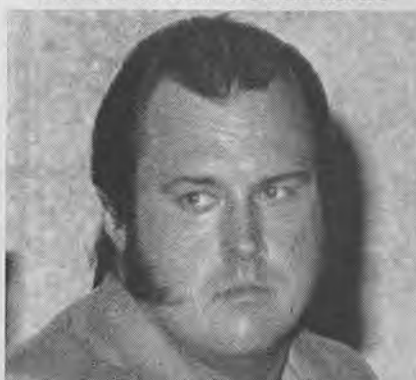
After a lengthy staredown, Flair landed three big chops on Sting that didn't faze him. Later, Flair clamped on the figure-four, but Sting managed to reverse it. Sting clamped the scorpion leglock on "The Nature Boy," but was forced to break it when Flair grabbed the ropes. Sting stormed Flair to deliver a clothesline, but Flair ducked and sent his challenger over the top rope to retain his title by disqualification.

OTHER BOUTS: Lex Luger pinned Arn Anderson ... Dusty Rhodes defeated Bobby Eaton ... Paul Ellering & Road Warrior Hawk beat Ivan Koloff & The Barbarian ... Mike Rotundo defeated Nikita Koloff by disqualification ... Stan Lane beat Ricky Santana.

RICHFIELD, OH By Jon Marshall



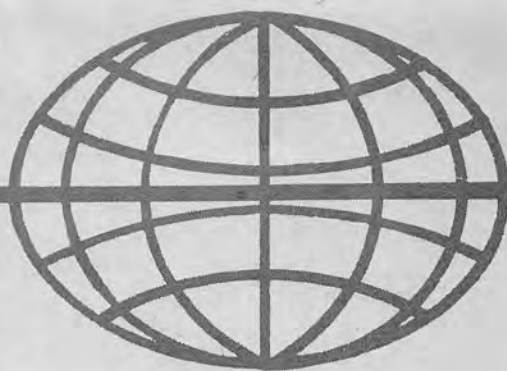
**RANDY SAVAGE
vs.
THE HONKY TONK MAN**



Several times during the match, Jimmy Hart and Peggy Sue provided distractions that saved Honky Tonk. Finally, Savage couldn't take it anymore and dragged Hart into the ring. Just as Savage was about to hit Hart, Honky Tonk grabbed Hart's fallen megaphone and prepared to hit Savage—but Randy ducked out of the way, allowing Hart to be hit by his own man. Savage was awarded the bout, but not the title.

OTHER BOUTS: Strike Force beat The Hart Foundation ... Sherri Martel defeated Velvet McIntyre ... Greg Valentine beat Brutus Beefcake by submission ... Rick Steamboat and Rick Rude were both counted out ... Sam Houston pinned Danny Davis ... Dino Bravo pinned Koko B. Ware.

WRESTLING CAPITALS



KNOXVILLE, TN By Louis Deacon



DOUG FURNAS
vs.
LORD HUMONGOUS



At the end of this wild stretcher match, Furnas dove at Humongous from the ring apron onto the floor, but missed. Frustrated, he took his anger out on manager Downtown Bruno, who had to be carried out on a stretcher. Humongous took Bruno off the stretcher and carried him back to the dressing room, saying he wouldn't wrestle without his manager. Furnas was then attacked by Buddy Landell, who had a loaded glove. Furnas won the match, but he also had to be carried out on a stretcher.

OTHER BOUTS: Tom Pritchard pinned Jonathan Boyd ... Buddy Landell pinned The Starfighter ... The RPMs beat Scott Armstrong & Keith Hart ... Robert Fuller, Jimmy Golden, & Dutch Mantel beat The Southern Boys & Frank Lancaster ... Mongolian Stomper beat Dan Davis.

EAST RUTHERFORD, NJ By Tommy Fierro



TED DIBIASE
vs.
KOKO B. WARE



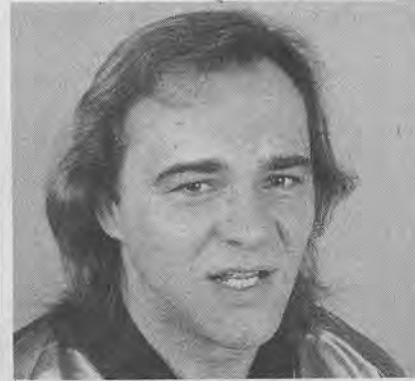
DiBiase started off with a series of fast punches, but they had little effect. Koko headbutted DiBiase out of the ring, then threw him into the steel ringpost. When DiBiase rolled back into the ring, Koko dropkicked him from the top rope and appeared on his way to a stunning upset. But Ware was then tripped by DiBiase's bodyguard, Virgil, allowing DiBiase to score the pin.

OTHER BOUTS: Hulk Hogan beat One Man Gang ... Don "The Rock" Muraco defeated Butch Reed by countout ... Jake Roberts beat Mr. Fuji ... The British Bulldogs defeated The Bolsheviks ... Hacksaw Duggan beat Harley Race ... Demolition defeated Billy Jack Haynes & Brady Boone ... Lanny Poffo pinned Mike Sharpe.

ATLANTA, GA By Randy Peterson



DUSTY RHODES
vs.
LARRY ZBYSZKO



This match before 16,002 fans at The Omni was for Dusty's U.S. title, but not Zbyszko's Western States belt. Unfortunately, this exciting bout was marred by a controversial finish. After the referee was knocked out, Kevin Sullivan ran into the ring with a hanger that Baby Doll had given him. When the ref woke up, he saw this and disqualified Zbyszko. Mike Rotundo then came to the ring for a three-on-one against Dusty, who was rescued by Barry Windham.

OTHER BOUTS: Ric Flair pinned Sting ... Lex Luger & Ole Anderson beat Tully Blanchard & Arn Anderson by disqualification ... Mike Rotundo pinned Nikita Koloff ... Road Warrior Hawk & Paul Ellering defeated The Warlord & The Barbarian in a \$50,000 ladder match.



Matt Brock's PLAIN SPEAKING

MINNEAPOLIS, MN: Let me set a couple of things straight about the AWA's so-called "controversy" surrounding the World title. I was in Minneapolis on February 4 for the card in question and I saw Greg Gagne pin Curt Hennig in a steel cage match. No doubt about it. The match *was* in a steel cage and Gagne *did* pin Hennig. But as far as I knew, the match *wasn't* for the title. I know they announced it that way, but the AWA rules clearly state that the title can't change hands in a cage. I talked to a couple of officials before the match, and as far as they knew, AWA President Stanley Blackburn hadn't sanctioned the match as being a *title*

match. The thing is, they didn't know Blackburn had to approve it, although apparently Al DeRusha, the promoter of the event, *did* know. I couldn't get a hold of DeRusha that night, but I went back to my seat with the impression that the match couldn't be for the title. It's as simple as this: Blackburn should've been informed sooner so he could have taken the proper action; the match shouldn't have been billed as a title event. This whole thing is a total mess and they'd better get it straightened out soon. World championships are much too important for this nonsense.



CURT HENNIG

MEMPHIS, TN: I'll be the first to speak up and tell you that women don't belong anywhere near the ring when the men are wrestling, but I'm willing to make an exception in rare cases. Missy Hyatt is one of those cases, and when I was tipped off that she'd be here for the February 20 television tapings, well, I made it my business to catch a flight to Memphis. First of all, Hyatt is one of the most controversial figures in wrestling, and you can take that any way you want. She bounced back and forth between the UWF and the WWF for a time before ending up as an NWA broadcaster, and now she's in the Championship Wrestling Association valeting for her brother-in-law Doug Gilbert. I'm not sure what her long-term plans are here (and she's not answering *any* questions about her husband Eddie), but whatever they are, a lot more men are going to be watching the CWA broadcasts. Eddie is due in to wrestle here, and you know that Missy will have something to do with that, but it's always hard to say what Gilbert will do. He matches up well with Jerry Lawler, the CWA champion, and I wouldn't be surprised to see those two go at it. There's one problem, though: Lawler sometimes dresses up like a woman to sneak-attack his opponents at ringside. Now, with Missy Hyatt around, Lawler's going to

Harder than nails, veteran wrestling reporter Matt Brock has logged more miles covering wrestling than any other journalist. Every month Matt will travel to the sport's hotbeds, reporting everything he sees without fear or favor

have a hard time looking like a woman. He'll have to come up with some other tricks just to offset the devious Gilbert and his conniving woman. One more CWA note: Their TV show will air on cable's Financial News Network beginning April 2 at 4 p.m. EST; Missy will *not* hurt their ratings.

UNIONDALE, NY: Back to the land of turnpikes and Benetton. My month wouldn't be the same anymore without a visit to the Nassau Mausoleum for another card of NWA professional wrestling. Stu Saks, *Inside Wrestling's* editor-in-chief, has been driving it through my head for months that the NWA's Coliseum cards are very important, because if the NWA can make headway into New York, they'll bite into some of the WWF's business. Well, the NWA wasn't doing much business at their February card here. After the disastrous Bunkhouse Stampede show in January, this one figured to be interesting. Would the fans come back again? Would the card last longer? Would the card start on time? Would the card be worth watching? The answers to those questions are some, yes, yes, and yes. Only a little more than 3,000 fans—down 3,000 from the last show and nearly 10,000 from the promising November debut—showed up for what turned out to be a *very* good card. Not once did I hear the fans chant "Refund!" and nearly every big name in the NWA was there. Mike Rotundo and Sting wrestled to a draw in an interesting scientific battle, and Barry Windham defeated Larry Zbyszko by disqualification—but not before Windham had words with Baby Doll (who shouldn't be near the ring in the first place). Then Road Warrior Hawk and Paul Ellering won a \$50,000 ladder match when Animal, a bandage covering his left eye and sunglasses covering both, ran out of the dressing room like a man possessed and cleared the ring with the ladder, which really got the fans on their feet. Finally, in the main event, Dusty Rhodes and Lex Luger beat Tully Blanchard and Ric Flair by disqualification when J.J. Dillon was caught hitting Luger with his shoe. Luger looked real good, and I'm not sure the comparisons to Hulk Hogan are

fair. Luger is much more agile and can do more technically, although he certainly doesn't stay in the ring very long. Could it be that Luger has over-trained for power and let his aerobic training slip? Think about that. Think about it until the NWA returns here in April. Let's see if this show will bring any more of the fans back. I think it will.

DALLAS, TX: Things are getting hot down here. Michael Hayes, late of the NWA, showed up at The Sportatorium a few days before his Badstreet Band's concert and stepped into the ring to greet the crowd. Terry Gordy and Buddy Roberts of The Freebirds were in the ring along with Iceman Parsons and The Angel of Death. Hayes told everybody that he has no beef with the Von Erichs and doesn't mind that The Freebirds befriended Iceman Parsons. Angel of Death, however, was another story. The words



GORDY, ICEMAN, ROBERTS, & ANGEL

Hayes used to describe Angel cannot be printed here, but it looks like these two will definitely clash in the near future. That would make Angel the odd man out, because you know Gordy and Roberts will side with Hayes. I'm not too sure about Iceman. He's always been a bit unpredictable (remember when he and Chris Adams parted ways during the UWF tag team tournament in February 1987?), but I'd say he'll go where the money is. As I said, things are getting hot down here, and it's no coincidence that The Freebirds are right in the middle of the action. □

Sign Our Petition:

BRING THE ROCK 'N' ROLL EXPRESS BACK TO THE NWA!

Rock 'n' Roll Express fans around the country are mourning the departure of their heroes from the NWA. But all is not lost!

By signing a special *Inside Wrestling* petition, you can help bring Rick Morton and Robert Gibson back to the NWA!

THERE WERE MANY sad faces leaving The Greensboro Coliseum on January 30. The male fans were enraged that Road Warrior Animal was seriously injured by Konga the Barbarian, The Warlord, and Ivan Koloff in a strength competition. But their anger was more than matched by the hurt felt in the hearts of the women on hand for the evening's matches.

The Rock 'n' Roll Express didn't show up. And by the end of the night, everybody knew that The Rock 'n' Roll Express had left the NWA.

"Why? When?" cried 14-year-old Donna Marvels as her mother





Rick Morton leglocks Shawn Michaels as The Rock 'n' Roll Express battles The Midnight Rockers for the AWA World tag title (above). Morton's first stop after leaving the NWA was Southern Championship Wrestling from Georgia, where he met Jim Bryant (below).



frantically tried to wipe the tears from her daughter's face. "How could Ricky and Robert just get up and leave? Were they forced to go? We all know that Ricky and Robert are the best of friends and love their fans. They would *never* leave us behind! How could this have happened?"

Those questions were on just about everybody's mind. Even Linda Carmichael, a 33-year-old secretary from Greensboro, was distraught. "They set such a great example for the children," said Carmichael, "and they're such great wrestlers. Even I enjoyed watching them. After all, they're

such great-looking guys! But if the NWA *forced* them to leave, then we, the fans, have a responsibility to Ricky and Robert to do something about it! And if Ricky and Robert left on their own, we have to let them know that we want them back."

NWA fans are tremendously upset over The Rock 'n' Roll Express' departure, and rightly so. Morton and Gibson are two of the most exciting athletes in the sport and have been an extremely successful tag team. They are four-time NWA World tag team champions and, prior to their departure, were top contenders to current champs Tully Blanchard and Arn Anderson.

Perhaps as important, though, The Rock 'n' Roll Express bring people to the arenas. Female fans, young and old, adore their good looks and free-living lifestyle. The men in the crowd appreciate their outstanding wrestling technique. The Express is, in every way, a tag team for everyone.

Now they're gone. But they might not be lost forever. When Morton and Gibson left the NWA, they vowed to remain together as a team. On February 15 in Memphis, the Rock 'n' Rolls nearly won the AWA World tag team title from The Midnight Rockers.

Sadly, however, the Express just doesn't seem the same unless they're in the NWA—and the NWA isn't the same unless the Express are battling in the ring.

But you might just have a chance to do something about it. If you're one of the millions of fans who wants to see Morton and Gibson back in the NWA, then you have nothing to lose by signing *Inside Wrestling's* "Bring The Rock 'n' Roll Express Back To The NWA" petition. Simply clip and fill out the coupon (or a reasonable facsimile) at the bottom of page 54, and mailing it to the address

(Continued on page 54)

INSIDE WRESTLING'S OFFICIAL RATINGS

TOP 15

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 1— RIC FLAIR
243, Minneapolis, MN | 4— LEX LUGER
268, Chicago, IL | 8— RANDY SAVAGE
245, Sarasota, FL | 12— GREG GAGNE
220, Robbinsdale, MN |
| 2— HULK HOGAN
302, Venice Beach, CA | 5— CURT HENNIG
235, Minneapolis, MN | 9— OWEN HART
223, Calgary, Alberta | 13— BAM BAM BIGELOW
368, Mt. Laurel, NJ |
| 3— DUSTY RHODES
302, Austin, TX | 6— AL PEREZ
238, Tampa, FL | 10— BRUTUS BEEFCAKE
273, San Francisco, CA | 14— TED DIBIASE
247, Omaha, NE |
| | 7— STING
260, Venice Beach, CA | 11— KERRY VON ERICH
260, Denton, TX | 15— HERCULES AYALA
273, Bayoman, PR |

NWA

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 1— RIC FLAIR
243, Minneapolis, MN | 4— LARRY ZBYSZKO
248, Pittsburgh, PA | 8— BOBBY EATON
233, Huntsville, AL | 12— JIM GARVIN
235, Tampa, FL |
| 2— DUSTY RHODES
302, Austin, TX | 5— LEX LUGER
268, Chicago, IL | 9— RONNIE GARVIN
231, Montreal, Quebec | 13— RON SIMMONS
260, Perry, GA |
| 3— STING
260, Venice Beach, CA | 6— MIKE ROTUNDO
245, Syracuse, NY | 10— ARN ANDERSON
249, Minneapolis, MN | 14— SHANE DOUGLAS
223, Pittsburgh, PA |
| | 7— BARRY WINDHAM
236, Sweetwater, TX | 11— RICK STEINER
248, Detroit, MI | 15— RICKY SANTANA
235, Orlando, FL |

AWA

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 1— CURT HENNIG
235, Minneapolis, MN | 4— KEVIN KELLY
271, Oakland, CA | 8— BARON VON RASCHKE
271, Berlin, Germany | 12— D.J. PETERSON
245, St. Joseph, MO |
| 2— GREG GAGNE
220, Robbinsdale, MN | 5— BOB ORTON JR.
245, Kansas City, KS | 9— JERRY SAGONOVICH
270, Allentown, PA | 13— PAUL DIAMOND
230, Thunder Bay, Ontario |
| 3— WAHOO McDANIEL
280, Midland, TX | 6— SOLDAT USTINOV
265, Moscow, Russia | 10— THE GRAPPLER
280, parts unknown | 14— PAT TANAKA
265, Honolulu, HI |
| | 7— BRIAN KNOBBS
295, Allentown, PA | 11— JEFF JARRETT
200, Hendersonville, TN | 15— SHEIK ADNAN AL-KAISS
235, Iran |

WWF

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 1— THE HONKY TONK MAN
255, Memphis, TN | 4— TED DIBIASE
247, Omaha, NE | 8— JAKE ROBERTS
246, Stone Mountain, GA | 12— ULTIMATE WARRIOR
280, Queens, NY |
| 2— HULK HOGAN
302, Venice Beach, CA | 5— BAM BAM BIGELOW
368, Mt. Laurel, NJ | 9— RICK STEAMBOAT
238, Honolulu, HI | 13— ONE MAN GANG
468, Chicago, IL |
| 3— ANDRE THE GIANT
497, Grenoble, France | 6— RANDY SAVAGE
245, Sarasota, FL | 10— GREG VALENTINE
243, Seattle, WA | 14— BUTCH REED
255, Tampa, FL |
| | 7— HACKSAW DUGGAN
280, Glens Falls, NY | 11— RICK RUDE
246, Robbinsdale, MN | 15— DINO BRAVO
246, Montreal, Quebec |

MOST POPULAR

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 1— HULK HOGAN
302, Venice Beach, CA | 4— LEX LUGER
268, Chicago, IL | 8— HACKSAW DUGGAN
280, Glens Falls, NY | 12— KEVIN VON ERICH
235, Denton, TX |
| 2— DUSTY RHODES
302, Austin, TX | 5— RANDY SAVAGE
245, Sarasota, FL | 9— OWEN HART
223, Calgary, Alberta | 13— GREG GAGNE
220, Robbinsdale, MN |
| 3— STING
260, Venice Beach, CA | 6— KERRY VON ERICH
260, Denton, TX | 10— BARRY WINDHAM
236, Sweetwater, TX | 14— CARLOS COLON
246, Santa Isabel, PR |
| | 7— BRUTUS BEEFCAKE
273, San Francisco, CA | 11— BAM BAM BIGELOW
368, Mt. Laurel, NJ | 15— DON MURACO
274, Sunset Beach, HI |

MOST HATED

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 1— TED DIBIASE
247, Omaha, NE | 4— LARRY ZBYSZKO
248, Pittsburgh, PA | 8— RICK RUDE
246, Robbinsdale, MN | 12— LORD HUMONGOUS
325, parts unknown |
| 2— ANDRE THE GIANT
497, Grenoble, France | 5— THE HONKY TONK MAN
255, Memphis, TN | 9— TERRY TAYLOR
225, Vero Beach, FL | 13— BOB ORTON JR.
245, Kansas City, KS |
| 3— RIC FLAIR
243, Minneapolis, MN | 6— CURT HENNIG
235, Minneapolis, MN | 10— MIKE ROTUNDO
245, Syracuse, NY | 14— KEVIN SULLIVAN
252, Boston, MA |
| | 7— TERRY GORDY
289, Chattanooga, TN | 11— AL PEREZ
238, Tampa, FL | 15— EDDIE GILBERT
222, Lexington, TN |

TAG TEAMS

- | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1— TULLY BLANCHARD & ARN ANDERSON
NWA World tag team champions | 6— BRETT HART & JIM NEIDHART
No. 2 contenders: WWF tag team title | 11— JOHN TATUM & JACK VICTORY
Wild West & WCCW Texas tag team champions |
| 2— RICK MARTEL & TITO SANTANA
WWF World tag team champions | 7— THE BRITISH BULLDOGS
No. 3 contenders: WWF World tag team title | 12— BARRY WINDHAM & LEX LUGER
No. 3 contenders: NWA tag team title |
| 3— BOBBY EATON & STAN LANE
U.S. tag team champions | 8— THE WARLORD & KONGA THE BARBARIAN
No. 2 contenders: NWA World tag team title | 13— ROBERT FULLER & JIMMY GOLDEN
Southeast Continental tag team champions |
| 4— DEMOLITION
No. 1 contenders: WWF World tag team title | 9— THE ROCK 'N' ROLL EXPRESS
No. 1 contenders: AWA World tag team title | 14— KERRY & KEVIN VON ERICH
World Class tag team champions |
| 5— THE MIDNIGHT ROCKERS
AWA World tag team champions | 10— BRUCE HART & BRIAN PILLMAN
Stampede International tag team champions | 15— THE SHEEPHERDERS
No. 4 contenders to NWA World tag team title |

These ratings are compiled by the editors with the assistance of promoters, wrestlers, and reporters around the country, and are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and the inherent skill of each wrestler . . . "Most Popular" and "Most Hated" ratings are based on nationwide surveys of wrestling fans and on mail that comes to our offices . . . Championships marked with asterisks on the "Roll Call of Champions" indicate title changes that have taken place since our previous issue . . . The information under the championship listing indicates the date that champion won the title, who the former champion was, and where the match took place .

For period ended February 26, 1988

ROLL CALL OF CHAMPIONS

- ACCW HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: JACK ARMSTRONG**
(December 12, 1987; from Victor Rivera; Hawaiian Gardens, CA)
- ACCW TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE MERCENARIES**
(December 12, 1987; from Peter Maivia Jr. & Prof. Tanaka; Hawaiian Gardens, CA)
- * **ALABAMA CHAMPION: TOM PRITCHARD**
(February 15, 1988; from Jonathan Boyd; Birmingham, AL)
- * **ALL-JAPAN ASIAN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: TAKASHI ISHIKAWA & MIGHTY INOUE**
(January 29, 1988; from Samson Fuyuki & Toshiaki Kamada; Tokyo, Japan)
- ALL-JAPAN INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION: JUMBO TSURUTA**
(October 21, 1986; from Stan Hansen; Tokyo)
- ALL-JAPAN INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE ROAD WARRIORS**
(March 12, 1987; from Jumbo Tsuruta & Genichiro Tenryu; Tokyo, Japan)
- ALL-JAPAN JR. HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: MASANOBU FUCHI**
(January 3, 1987; from Kuniaki Kobayashi; Tokyo, Japan)
- * **ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S JAPANESE CHAMPION: YUMI OGURA**
(January 29, 1988; from Bull Nakano; Nagoya, Japan)
- ALL-JAPAN UNITED NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP: GENICHIRO TENRYU**
(April 26, 1986; tournament final over Ted DiBiase; Omiya, Japan)
- AWA TV CHAMPION: GREG GAGNE**
(December 27, 1987; tournament final over Adrian Adonis; Las Vegas, NV)
- AWA WOMEN'S CHAMPION: MADUSA MICELI**
(December 27, 1987; tournament final over Candi Divine; Las Vegas, NV)
- AWA WORLD CHAMPION: CURT HENNIG**
(May 2, 1987; from Nick Bockwinkel; San Francisco, CA)
- AWA WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE MIDNIGHT ROCKERS**
(December 27, 1987; from Dennis Condrey & Randy Rose; Las Vegas, NV)
- BRITISH COMMONWEALTH CHAMPION: GAMA SINGH**
(August 7, 1987; from Owen Hart; Calgary, Alberta)
- CENTRAL STATES CHAMPION: D.J. PETERSON**
(December 25, 1987; from Bulldog Bob Brown; St. Joseph, MO)
- CENTRAL STATES TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: TITLE VACANT**
(most recently held by Rick Patterson & Mike Stone)
- CENTRAL STATES TV CHAMPION: MASA CHONO**
(January 1, 1988; from Mike George; Des Moines, IA)
- * **CWA CHAMPION: MAX PAIN**
(February 8, 1988; from Jerry Lawler; Memphis, TN)
- * **CWA TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: MAX PAIN & GARY YOUNG**
(February 1, 1988; tournament final over Manny Fernandez & Jeff Jarrett; Memphis, TN)
- FLORIDA CHAMPION: MIKE ROTUNDO**
(April 18, 1987; from Sir Oliver Humperdink; Lakeland, FL)
- ICW TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE MOONDOGS**
(December 28, 1987; from Prince Kaluha & Tom Brandi)
- IWGP CHAMPION: ANTONIO INOKI**
(June 19, 1986; tournament final over Dick Murdoch; Tokyo, Japan)
- IWGP INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: KENGO KIMURA & TATSUMI FUJINAMI**
(January 18, 1988; from Yoshiaki Fujiwara & Kazuo Yamazaki; Tokyo, Japan)
- IWGP JR. HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: HIRO HASE**
(December 27, 1987; from Kuniaki Kobayashi; Tokyo, Japan)
- JAPANESE WOMEN'S CHAMPION: CHIGUSA NAGOYO**
(October 20, 1987; from Yukari Omori; Tokyo, Japan)
- JAPANESE WOMEN'S TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: TITLE HELD UP**
(most recently held by Bull Nakano & Kador Saito)
- NWA JR. HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: NELSON ROYAL**
(October 16, 1987; by NWA decision)
- * **NWA SIX-MAN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: IVAN KOLOFF, THE BARBARIAN & THE WARLORD**
(February 12, 1988; from Paul Ellering, Road Warrior Hawk, & Dusty Rhodes; Philadelphia, PA)
- NWA TV CHAMPION: MIKE ROTUNDO**
(January 26, 1988; from Nikita Koloff; Raleigh, NC)
- NWA WORLD CHAMPION: RIC FLAIR**
(November 26, 1987; from Ronnie Garvin; Chicago, IL)
- NWA WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: TULLY BLANCHARD & ARN ANDERSON**
(September 29, 1987; from The Rock 'n' Roll Express; Misenerheimer, NC)
- PACIFIC NORTHWEST CHAMPION: THE GRAPPLER**
(October 31, 1987; from Mike Miller; Portland, OR)
- PACIFIC NORTHWEST TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: SCOTT PETERSON & STEVE DOLL**
(November 7, 1987; from Joey Jackson & Super Ninja; Portland, OR)
- PWF CHAMPION: STAN HANSEN**
(April 24, 1987; tournament final over Hiroshi Wajima; Yokohama, Japan)
- PWF TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: GENICHIRO TENRYU & ASHURA HARA**
(September 3, 1987; from Stan Hansen & Austin Idol; Nagoya, Japan)
- SOUTHEAST CHAMPION: LORD HUMONGOUS**
(December 25, 1987; from Dan Davis; Knoxville, TN)
- SOUTHEAST CONTINENTAL CHAMPION: DUTCH MANTEL**
(April 13, 1987; from Adrian Street; Birmingham, AL)
- SOUTHEAST CONTINENTAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: ROBERT FULLER & JIMMY GOLDEN**
(May 25, 1987; from Jerry Stubbs & Tony Anthony; Birmingham, AL)
- SOUTHEAST U.S. JR. HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: TITLE VACANT**
(most recently held by Larry Hamilton)
- STAMPEDE NORTH AMERICAN CHAMPION: OWEN HART**
(April 10, 1987; from Mahan Singh; Calgary, Alberta)
- STAMPEDE INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: BRUCE HART & BRIAN PILLMAN**
(November 13, 1987; from Mahan Singh & Jerry Morrow; Calgary, Alberta)
- TENNESSEE HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE: DOUG FURNAS**
(July 17, 1987; tournament final over Tony Anthony; Knoxville, TN)
- U.S. CHAMPION: DUSTY RHODES**
(November 26, 1987; from Lex Luger; Greensboro, NC)
- U.S. TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE MIDNIGHT EXPRESS**
(May 16, 1987; tournament final over Barry Windham & Ronnie Garvin)
- UWA CANADIAN CHAMPION: JOHN TENTA**
(November 28, 1987; from J.R. Bundy; Cloverdale, British Columbia)
- UWA HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: RICHIE MAGNETT**
(January 2, 1988; awarded by UWA officials)
- UWA INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: I-TON & DORY SINGH**
(January 3, 1988; from Frog & Atomic Kid; Cloverdale, British Columbia)
- UWA INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CHAMPION: IRON MAIDEN**
(October 13, 1987; from Delta Dawn; Cloverdale, British Columbia)
- UWA JR. HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: RICK DAVIS**
(January 8, 1988; from Verne Siebert; Cloverdale, British Columbia)
- WESTERN STATES HERITAGE CHAMPION: LARRY ZBYSZKO**
(January 24, 1988; from Barry Windham; Uniondale, NY)
- WILD WEST TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: JOHN TATUM & JACK VICTORY**
(November 30, 1987; tournament final over Missing Link & Jeff Raitz; Ft. Worth, TX)
- WORLD CLASS CHAMPION: AL PEREZ**
(October 26, 1987; by World Class officials' decision)
- WORLD CLASS JR. HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: ERIC EMBRY**
(December 25, 1987; from Shaun Simpson; Dallas, TX)
- WORLD CLASS SIX-MAN CHAMPIONS: TERRY GORDY, BUDDY ROBERTS, & ICEMAN PARSONS**
(January 4, 1988; from Matt Borne, Steve Simpson, & Chris Adams; Ft. Worth, TX)
- WORLD CLASS TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: KERRY & KEVIN VON ERICH**
(November 25, 1987; from Brian Adias & Frank Lancaster; Shreveport, LA)
- WORLD CLASS TV CHAMPION: TONY ATLAS**
(May 22, 1987; reinstated by World Class officials)
- WORLD CLASS TEXAS CHAMPION: MATT BORNE**
(November 10, 1987; from Ted Arcidi; Midland, TX)
- * **WORLD CLASS TEXAS TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: JACK VICTORY & JOHN TATUM**
(February 15, 1988; by World Class officials' decision)
- WORLD PACIFIC CHAMPION: SUPERFLY TUI**
(April 11, 1987; from Super Machine I; Honolulu, HI)
- WORLD PACIFIC TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: FARMER BOY IPO & LEROY BROWN**
(August 9, 1986; from Mad Max & Super Max; Honolulu, HI)
- WORLD WRESTLING ALLIANCE HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: MIKE GEORGE**
(January 23, 1988; tournament final over Dick Slater; Kansas City, KS)
- WORLD WRESTLING ASSOCIATION HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: GREG WOJOKOWSKI**
(May 3, 1987; from Scott Resteiner; Toledo, OH)
- * **WORLD WRESTLING ASSOCIATION TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: CHRIS CARTER & CALYPSO JIM**
(February 14, 1988; tournament final over Jerry Graham Jr. & Don Kent; Toledo, OH)
- * **WWC CARIBBEAN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: BOBBY JAGGERS & DON CRAWFORD**
(February 5, 1988; from Chris & Mark Youngblood; Guaynabo, Puerto Rico)
- WWC JR. HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: HURRICANE CASTILLO**
(January 5, 1988; from El Gran Mendoza; Mayaguez, Puerto Rico)
- * **WWC NORTH AMERICAN CHAMPION: ABDULLAH THE BUTCHER**
(January 30, 1988; from Miguel Perez Jr.; San Juan, Puerto Rico)
- WWC PUERTO RICAN CHAMPION: MIGUEL PEREZ JR.**
(January 6, 1988; from Kareem Muhammad; San Juan, Puerto Rico)
- WWC TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: MR. POGO & KENDO NAGASAKI**
(January 16, 1988; from The Invaders; San Juan, Puerto Rico)
- * **WWC UNIVERSAL CHAMPION: HERCULES AYALA**
(February 13, 1988; from Carlos Colon; Caguas, Puerto Rico)
- WWC WOMEN'S CHAMPION: WENDI RICHTER**
(July 28, 1987; from Monster Ripper; Trinidad, West Indies)
- WWF INTERCONTINENTAL CHAMPION: THE HONKY TONK MAN**
(June 2, 1987; from Rick Steamboat; Buffalo, NY)
- WWF WORLD CHAMPION: TITLE VACANT**
(most recently held by Andre the Giant)
- WWF WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: RICK MARTEL & TITO SANTANA**
(October 27, 1987; The Hart Foundation; Syracuse, NY)
- WWF WOMEN'S CHAMPION: SHERRI MARTEL**
(July 24, 1987; from The Fabulous Moolah; Houston, TX)
- WWF WOMEN'S TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE JUMPING BOMB ANGELS**
(January 24, 1988; from Lelani Kai & Judy Martin; Hamilton, Ontario)

The Noble Savage: **HOW BEAUTY KILLED THE BEAST WITHIN “THE MACHO MAN”**

The cheers are loud when Randy Savage opens the ropes to allow the lovely Elizabeth to enter the ring. But it's now becoming clear that her beauty—and Savage's catering to Elizabeth—has caused “The Macho Man” to lose his competitive edge!

THE QUESTIONS HAVE been points of conjecture ever since Randy Savage and Elizabeth joined forces two years ago. They're a topic of debate whenever fans sit down and talk about the sport.

What happens when a beautiful woman takes over the career of wrestling's most notorious renegade? Would Miss Elizabeth help or hurt Randy Savage? Would her beauty inspire Savage to greater

heights, or would it break his spirit?

For admirers of “The Macho Man,” the answer appears tragically clear.

Beauty has slain the beast.

The Savage of old was a jumble of muscles and nerves whose next move even he couldn't anticipate. Fast as light, dangerous as a missile, Savage was the type of opponent wrestlers feared to see across the ring from them.

“He's too unpredictable,” said one opponent. “When you add together his energy, strength, and agility, he's too much to handle. They talk about Lex Luger being ‘The Total Package’; hell, Savage *invented* the term. Four years ago, in Memphis, you couldn't find a man who didn't sweat bullets about stepping into the ring with him. He had all the tools. He had everything.”

Everything except sound management. Savage's physical package didn't include room for brainier concerns. He didn't possess a head for figures or dates. He mismanaged his money, failed to secure the title matches his skills demanded, and pursued a lifestyle free of responsibility and recognition.

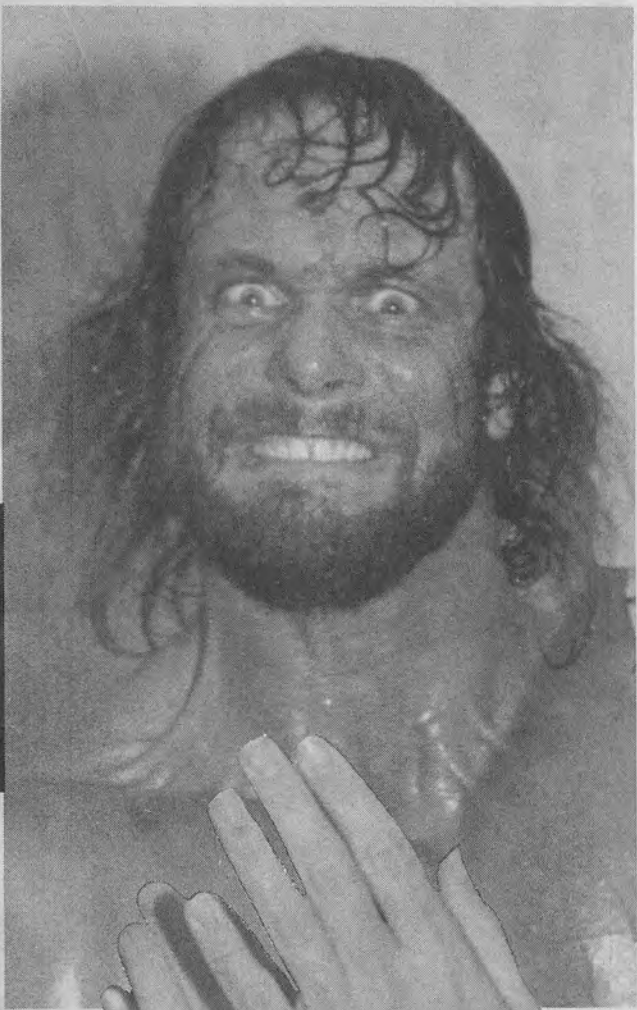
He needed a manager.

Savage's arrival in the WWF touched off a big-digit, highly publicized bidding war. Every manager saw Savage as the golden ticket to the WWF World championship. He owned all the skills necessary to unseat Hulk Hogan. Savage waded through Bobby Heenan



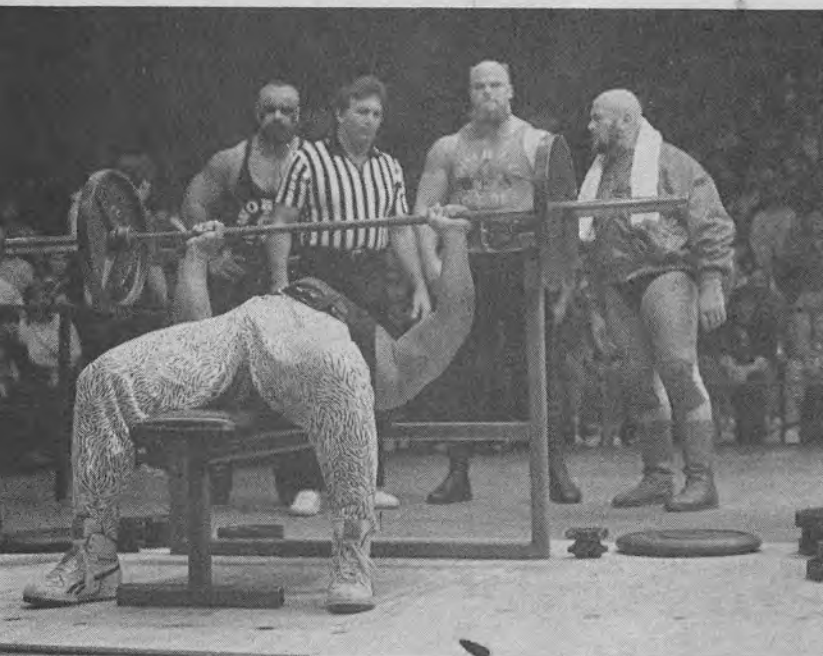
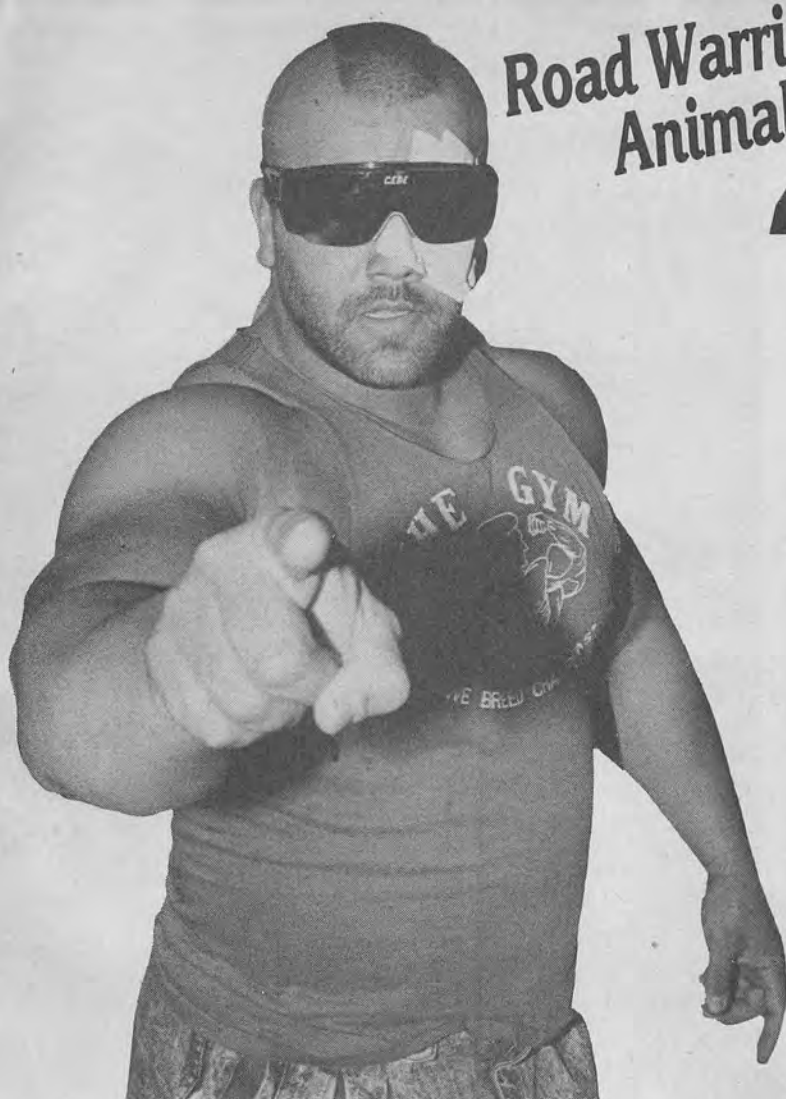
The Honky Tonk Man backs Randy Savage into the turnbuckle. Murmurs about Savage's loss of aggressiveness have grown louder since his unsuccessful attempt to win the Intercontinental title from Honky Tonk on national television.

(Continued on page 56)

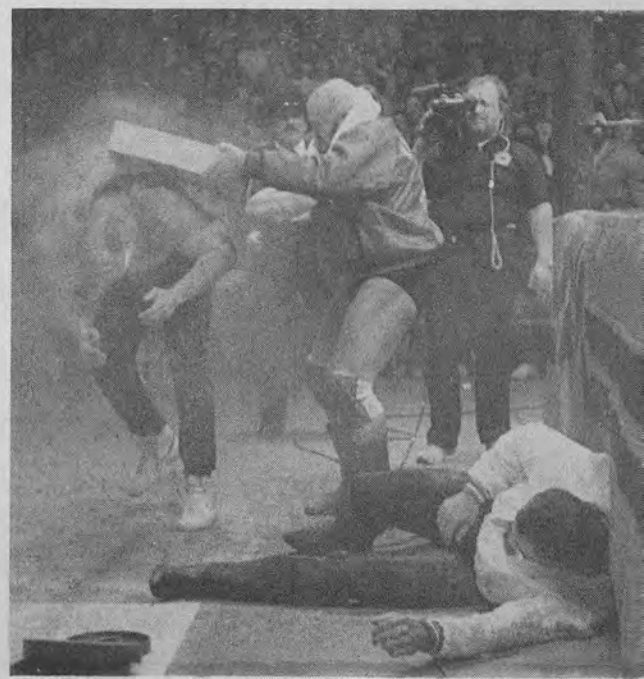


Road Warrior
Animal's

Blood Vow **“WARLORD & FOR DOING**



The incident that started it all: Road Warrior Animal prepares to benchpress 600 pounds as The Barbarian, The Warlord, and Ivan Koloff look on (above). Koloff throws a box of chalk powder in Hawk and Animal's faces (top right), and whacks Hawk with the chalk holder (right). The whole attack was orchestrated by Paul Jones, who originally wanted to prove that his men are the strongest in wrestling. He proved nothing.



An eye for an eye simply won't do. In his determined quest for revenge, Road Warrior Animal has declared a bloodlust for all the body parts of The Warlord and Konga the Barbarian!

BARBARIAN WILL PAY THIS TO MY EYE!"

THERE HAVE BEEN few sobering moments in the lives of The Road Warriors. Destruction, not reflection, is their strong suit. Reality is cloaked in a brand of casual brutality most other men could not endure.

As a result, their latest episode of violence is noteworthy—not because of the volume of blood spilled (a considerable amount, make no mistake about that), but because of the philosophical ramifications of the incident.

"My life was reduced to a strand of bone the width of a fingernail," Road Warrior Animal says, his voice still echoing his disbelief. "Doctors told me I might never wrestle again. They told me I might never see again. I had to consider what's *really* important to me. I had to evaluate a lot of things in my life."

What did Animal conclude after his bout of soul-searching?

"I don't care if *both* my eyes are poked out, my ears boxed, and the vocal cords ripped out of my throat," he hissed. "With my last dying breath I will make Warlord and Barbarian pay for what they did to me. They are dead men. They have no future. They should make no plans. Hawk and I are going to kill them."

Could a poet issue a more eloquent statement? The twin sonnets of sadism, The Road Warriors, are primed for destruction with an uncommon vengeance. And if their bite matches their bark, the army of Paul Jones better start marching. Quickly.

"What Barbarian did to Animal breaks all rules," claims Legion of Doom director Paul Ellering. "It is a breach of human rights that cannot

be overlooked."

What happened was this: Paul Jones challenged the Warriors to a weightlifting contest against Barbarian and Warlord. When Ellering and the Warriors declined, Jones sweetened the stakes by offering \$50,000 to the winning team.

"The \$50,000 meant nothing," says Ellering. "The Warriors accepted the challenge to silence Jones. We wanted to end this silly controversy once and for all, and if we could annoy Jones by taking his money, too, so be it. We accepted the challenge in good faith."

The contest rules called for a bench-press competition. After both teams lifted 475 pounds, Ellering demanded the weight be increased to 600. Jones insisted the weights be raised in 25-pound increments. While arguments raged back and

(Continued on page 58)

Animal lies nearly unconscious after The Warlord smashed his head into the weights. The bone around the eye socket cracked in several places, requiring several hours of special surgery.



HOTSEAT

BABY DOLL

"I'VE GOT THE GOODS ON DUSTY RHODES!"

IS THERE ANY woman in wrestling more dangerous than Baby Doll?

Gino Hernandez, Tully Blanchard, Dusty Rhodes, Ric Flair, and even Jim Cornette's mother, learned about her the hard way: Baby Doll is unstable and can't maintain a relationship. She left Hernandez for Blanchard. Then she left Blanchard for Rhodes. Then, after Rhodes lost the NWA World title in the summer of 1986 just two weeks after he had won it, Baby Doll called him a loser. She started showing up at interviews with Flair before falling into Mama Cornette's good graces. Then she went to the Central States area, where she managed The Warlord for a few months. Then she disappeared for almost a year.

Now she's back. Last November, Larry Zbyszko made a move from the AWA to the NWA and, impressed by Baby Doll's knowledge of the sport, asked her to be his manager/valet. On January 24, Zbyszko, with Baby Doll's help, pinned Barry Windham for the Western States title.

A few weeks later, Baby Doll shocked wrestling. Dusty Rhodes was being honored for winning The Bunkhouse Stampede when Baby Doll came out and said, "Rhodes, your past is

not as clean as everyone thinks." She then removed a few photos from her bag and showed them to Rhodes; Dusty turned ashen.

Is there any women in wrestling more dangerous than Baby Doll?

Ignoring this danger, Senior Editor Bill Apter flew to Atlanta to speak with her. Outspoken as ever, she had plenty to say.

“

As long as I can hold those pictures over his head as a threat, I've got him in the palm of my hand. I know how to control a man as weak as Rhodes.

”

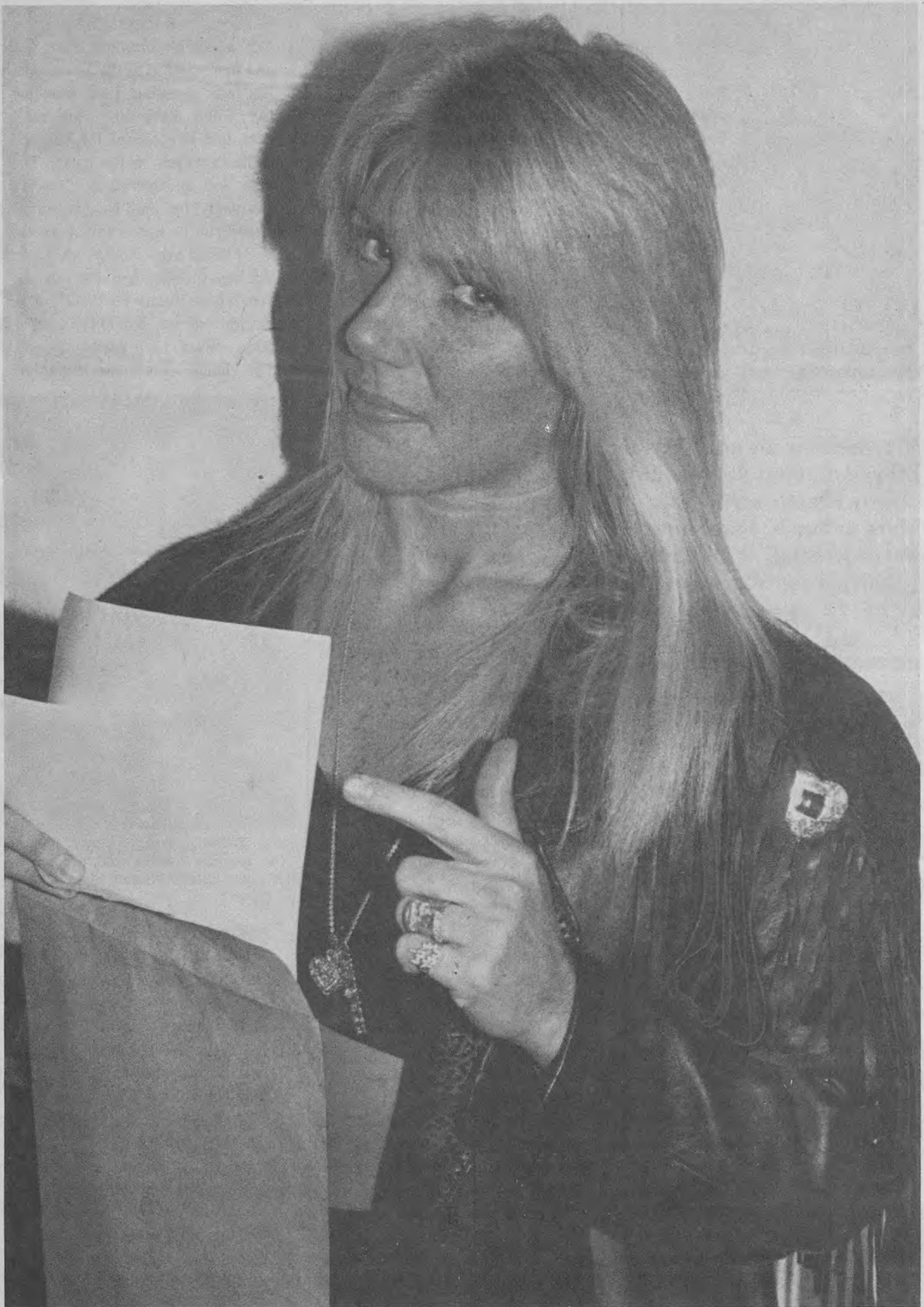
Q: Let's get right to the point. What was in that envelope? What was it that made Dusty Rhodes react the way he did?

A: That's none of your business, Apter, and none of anybody else's business, either. What was in that envelope is between me, Rhodes, and Larry Zbyszko. If I reveal the

contents of that envelope, I lose my trump card. Rhodes will have nothing left to lose. But as long as I can hold those pictures over his head as a threat, I've got him in the palm of my hand. Listen, Apter, I know how to control a man as weak as Rhodes. I've seen plenty of them in my time, right down from Gino to Tully, and I know every weakness they've got. I guarantee you that Rhodes doesn't want anybody to know what's in that envelope, and I'm willing to keep it that way. For the time being, of course! But let me assure you: I've got the goods on Dusty Rhodes!

Q: Ah, you're an evil woman, Baby Doll. No wonder a sadistic madman like Zbyszko wanted you as his manager. You two are made for each other, although I'm not sure which one of you is more dangerous. The way you use men makes me sick. I'm just . . .

A: You're weak, just like the rest of them, Apter. You're scared of a powerful woman. You're scared of a woman who knows what she wants and does what she wants. I know your kind, Apter. You're the kind who wants a wife to sit home





“
We, meaning me and Larry [Zbyszko], must destroy the Dusty Rhodes myth. Tear him to shreds. Force him out of wrestling. Embarrass him beyond all reason.
”

with the children and clean house all day while you go off to work, but when she rings that phone, you jump. Tell me, Apter, who does the cooking in your house? Who takes care of the children? You're one of those henpecked Long Island husbands, aren't you, Apter?

Q: Now that's neither here nor there. This interview is about you, not me, and I'm not going to get drawn into a discussion of my personal life, so let's get back to the point. When, if ever, are you going to reveal those photos? I saw the look on Dusty's face when he saw them, so it must be something pretty incriminating.

A: That's right, Apter. It's something that will destroy the Dusty Rhodes myth forever. Listen, I was with that man for a long time. To tell you the truth, it's something I look back on with embarrassment, something I hope I'll never do again, but there are a lot of things I learned about Dusty Rhodes back

then that will help me now. If there's one thing I've learned, it's always get something out of everybody, no matter how bad the relationship might be. Believe me, I got more out of Rhodes than he got out of me.

Q: I believe it. And I would imagine that those pictures are part of this "stairway to heaven" plan you've been talking about.

A: It all ties together. The first step was to win the Western States title from Windham. That was done—and with very little difficulty, I might add. Now the goal is the U.S. title, and that means Dusty Rhodes. It means that we, meaning me and Larry, must beat him in every way possible. But not just beat him, *destroy* the Dusty Rhodes myth. Tear him to shreds. Force him out of wrestling. Embarrass him beyond all reason. Then comes the *coup de grace*, the NWA World heavyweight championship. Ric Flair was one of the better men I've been associated with, but he has his weaknesses. I know what they are and I'm going to help Larry exploit them. That's why he made me his manager. He knows that I know more about these men than any other person alive.

Q: Let's go back to January 24 at the Nassau Coliseum, where Zbyszko defeated Windham for the Western States title. Now let's face it, Zbyszko would have *never* won without your interference.

A: That's all a matter of opinion.

Q: Wrong. It's a matter of *fact*. Now, right or wrong: Windham was going for the pin when you handed Zbyszko the shoe.

A: No comment.

Q: Then Zbyszko hit Windham with the shoe.

A: No comment. I haven't seen the replays.

Q: And before that, Windham, despite injuring himself, reversed Zbyszko's piledriver, one of the most feared moves in wrestling, and delivered a ferocious backdrop.

Windham outwrestled Zbyszko . . .

A: But he didn't *outsmart* him, and and there's more to this game than just basic wrestling. Look at a guy like Mike Rotundo. You can't deny that he's one of the best scientific wrestlers in the sport. The man was all-America at Syracuse University, but until he changed his attitude all he had was that worthless Florida title. Now, with Kevin Sullivan showing him the way, he beat Nikita Koloff for the TV title. Before Sullivan, Rotundo could've *never* dreamed of beating Koloff. The change of attitude meant ev-



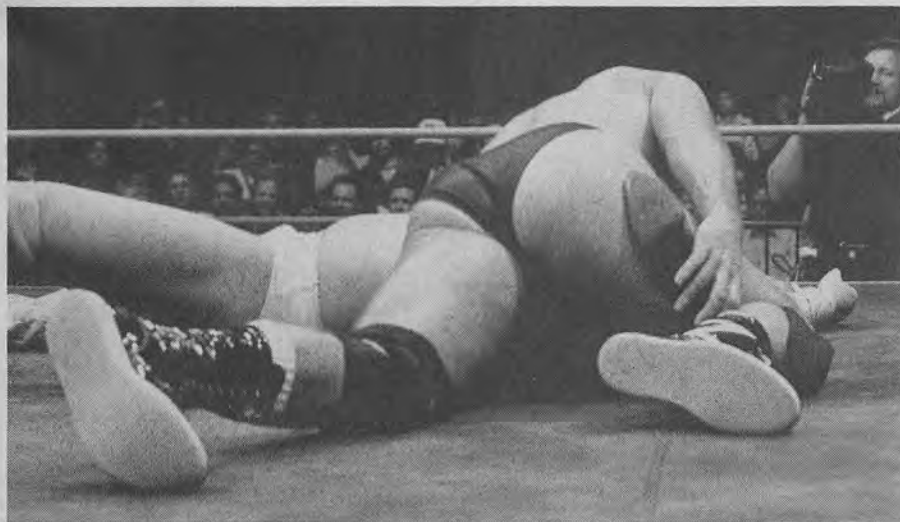
Larry Zbyszko chinlocks Dusty Rhodes. "The American Dream's" U.S. title is Baby Doll's next goal for Western States champion Zbyszko.

everything. That's the thing about Windham. He could've been UWF champion at Starrcade, but he didn't go in for the kill when he had Williams down. Windham lacks the killer instinct. He can wrestle, but he can't win. The man's too hung up on fair play. Well, I can guarantee you that it'll get him nowhere.

Q: That's all a matter of opinion. It seems to me that fair play and following the rules means absolutely nothing to you. For example, there was that match just a few weeks ago when Rhodes beat your man, your man Zbyszko, by disqualifica-



Part one of Zbyszko and Baby Doll's "stairway to heaven" plan is completed as Zbyszko clocks Barry Windham (above) and covers him for the pin (below). The shoe Baby Doll handed Zbyszko is clearly evident in the second photo.



tion in a U.S. title match. Now there was a situation where your insistence on interfering and going around the rules cost Zbyszko the match. Or are you going to deny that you handed Kevin Sullivan that coat hanger?

A: I won't deny it.

Q: Well, the referee immediately disqualified Zbyszko. Let's face it, you cost Zbyszko the match.

A: But then what happened? I'll tell you: Mike, Kevin, and Larry kicked Rhodes' fat hide, and it would've been even worse if his buddy Windham hadn't come to

the rescue. Listen, we're willing to be patient. I don't expect Larry to win the title right away, especially since Rhodes has the referees, the promoters, and all the officials on his side. He's gonna be tough to beat. But if we wear him down and keep him constantly looking over his shoulder, he's gonna be easy prey. Easy like a dead elephant.

Q: You're willing to be patient? I've never heard of Baby Doll being patient. You left Gino flat. You left Tully for Dusty. Dusty loses the title and you leave him, too. You



“

I don't expect Larry to win the [U.S.] title right away, especially since Rhodes has the referees, the promoters, and all the officials on his side.

”

worked with half-a-dozen different wrestlers in less than a year. You're one of the most unstable women I've ever seen. Who's to say that you're not going to leave Zbyszko, too?

A: This is different, Apter. There's no romantic involvement, just a business relationship. Larry doesn't call me his *personal* like Rhodes did. He doesn't try to own me. I'm not his "Perfect 10." I'm not his *anything*. I don't belong to Larry and he doesn't belong to me. We have a business relationship. I'm constantly watching tapes and devising new strategies for him. I plan road trips for him. I come to the ring with him to make sure he doesn't get taken advantage of by the referees. This is the way it should've always been with everyone else.

Q: Well, I'd be willing to bet that it ends up the same way as it did with everyone else.

A: You're wrong, Apter. Just wait and see. ☐

ROBBED!

WHEN IS A title match not a title match? When it's an AWA title match, that's when.

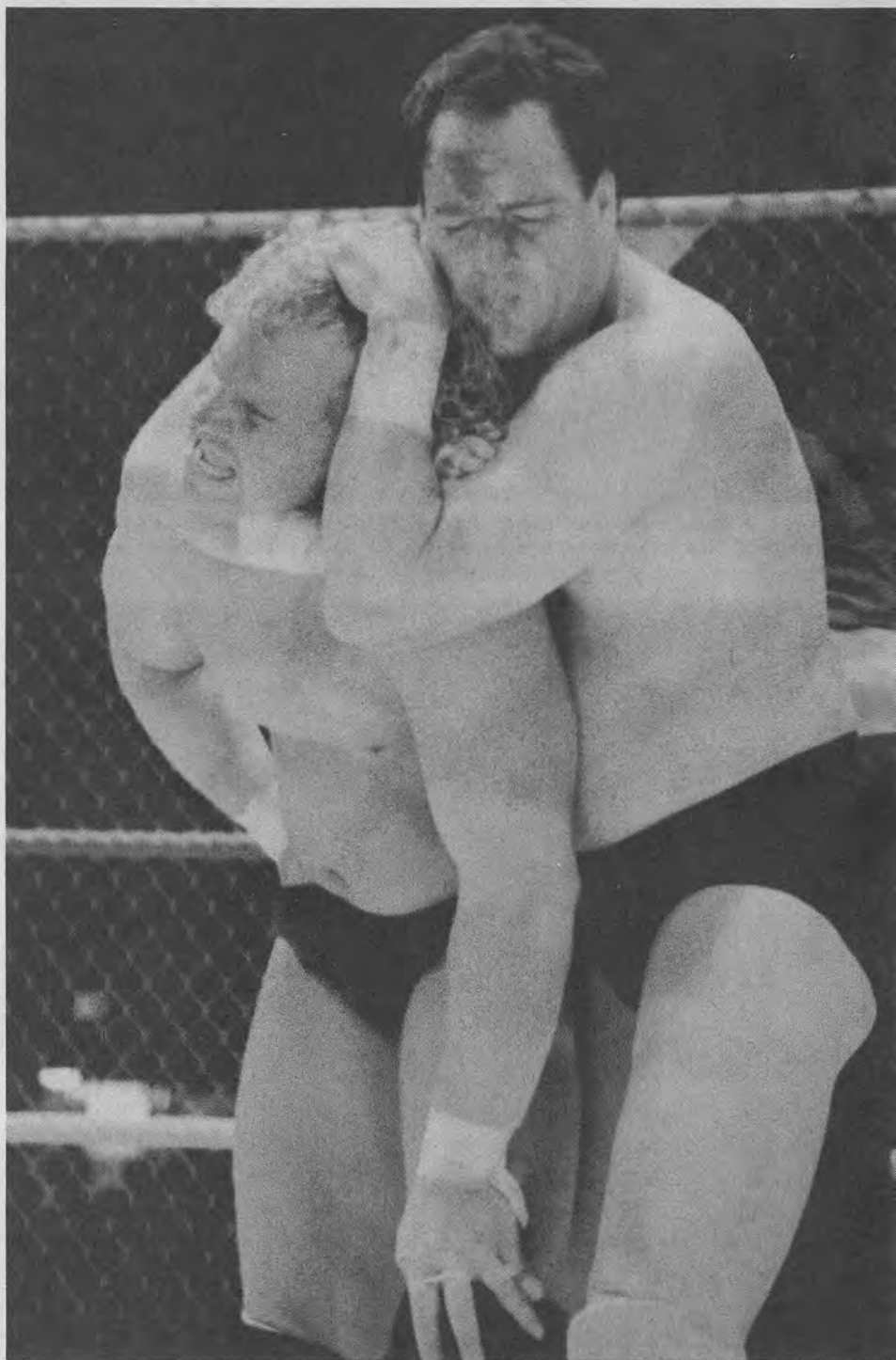
That may sound like a joke, but you won't hear any laughter from the camp of Greg Gagne. For weeks, a steel cage encounter between Gagne and his ex-friend, AWA World champion Curt Hennig, was publicized as a World title match. Before taking the ring that night, Gagne said, "I'm prepared. I'm pumped up tonight. There are some new moves that I'm going to try. I feel ready to win the belt."

Gagne appeared to have fulfilled his prediction when, after a grueling action-filled match, he pinned Hennig and walked out of the cage with the belt.

Enter AWA President Stanley Blackburn—called the Commissioner of Caprice by some, and names we are unable to print by many others—who denied Gagne the victory and restored the championship to Hennig.

"A title belt cannot change hands in the course of a cage match unless the AWA office sanctions it," Blackburn explained in his ruling. "The promoter [Al DeRusha] was wrong in saying it was a title match. Had he filed the necessary paperwork in time, there would have been no problem. Although we received their request before the match, it was not within the required deadline."

So blame it on bureaucracy, a fact that certainly won't diminish Gagne's outrage. "I signed for a *title* match," he says. "It said so right on the contract! What the hell difference does it make if the match took place in a



Gagne Defeats Hennig—And Doesn't Get The AWA Belt!



Greg Gagne clamps the sleeper on Curt Hennig, his old friend and now bitter rival (opposite page). Firmly in control, Gagne takes his frustrations out on Hennig (above). Gagne has good reason to be upset: Time and again, his title aspirations have been thwarted by AWA President Stanley Blackburn's questionable decisions.

Greg Gagne thought he had won the AWA World title. The fans thought Gagne had won the AWA World title. But when AWA President Stanley Blackburn got involved in the situation, Curt Hennig still had the belt around his waist—and controversy reigned supreme once more in the AWA!



As Gagne's hand is raised in victory, he thinks he has won the AWA World championship, but Blackburn decided otherwise by ruling that the title could not change hands in a cage.

cage, in a ring, or in the water?"

Some local promoters within the AWA hierarchy *are* recognizing Gagne as World champion, including local officials in Chicago, Denver, San Francisco, Minneapolis, and Wisconsin. But Blackburn—and, as a result, the AWA officially—maintains Hennig is the champion.

"Those local promoters recognizing Gagne as champion will be reprimanded and, if they continue, will have their licenses suspended," Blackburn asserts. "Curt Hennig is champion, via my official decision, and all promotional arms of the AWA *must* abide by the central office in order to maintain the integrity of the organization. It's that simple."

"It's not as if there was a disputed decision," Gagne claims. "I pinned Hennig cleanly! There was no controversy! How can they say it wasn't a

title match? How can they return the belt on such a meager technicality?"

Gagne, who has spent his entire career in the AWA, should not be surprised. Blackburn has been sharply criticized for the AWA's inconsistent rules and policies. One wrestler, preferring anonymity, called Blackburn "the only rulebreaking commissioner in the business."

There are plenty of examples of Blackburn's inconsistency. Michael Hayes' infamous run-in on behalf of Steve Regal and Jim Garvin cost The Road Warriors their AWA tag team championship. Films clearly demonstrate Hayes interfering in the match, but no action was ever taken.

Stan Hansen was stripped of his AWA World title because he failed to appear for a title match against Nick Bockwinkel. Bockwinkel, the leading contender, was awarded the title in a



Gagne goes to the air as Hennig lies flat on his back (above). Greg frequently has to worry about interference from Larry "The Ax" Hennig, Curt's father (below). As it stands, Gagne may only be able to win the title if Blackburn himself is the referee!

decision that met with near unanimous disapproval. At the time, Bockwinkel said that he was "not entirely comfortable with [the] situation; I prefer to win my matches in the ring." Not uncomfortable enough, though, as he accepted the decision and the belt. Hansen, like the Warriors before him, declined to file a protest. "The man's an idiot," Hansen said, referring to the AWA president. "I have better things to do with my time than litigate with an idiot."

Nearly a year later, Bockwinkel was knocked practically unconscious by a roll of coins handed to Curt Hennig by Larry Zbyszko during a title match, a fact dismissed by the AWA, even though it cost Bockwinkel the title.

But the most relevant controversy during Blackburn's term as president came in February 1982 in Chicago, when Hulk Hogan was offered a title



match with AWA champion Nick Bockwinkel with the added stipulation that should the match end by disqualification in the challenger's favor, he would be awarded the title belt. Bockwinkel's manager, Bobby Heenan, did in fact interfere, causing his wrestler's disqualification. Hogan, in turn, was given the belt. But his celebration was a short one. Blackburn ruled that the promoter was not within his rights to offer the disqualification stipulation and he returned the belt to Bockwinkel.

Nine-time former AWA World champion Verne Gagne thinks Blackburn is a fine AWA president. He defends him, saying, "Stanley Blackburn is a fair man. If he makes a decision, I'm sure Greg will abide by it."

The younger Gagne does not share his father's opinion. When asked if he would abide by the decision, Greg cried, "What choice do I have? Everyone knows that protest is futile. I just have to go out there next time and pin him again, that's all."

For his part, Hennig downplays the controversy. "What the hell is everyone getting their bowels upset about?" he asks, his face a mask of sly innocence. "I knew all along it wasn't a legal title match. Do you think I would allow the misbegotten offspring of Verne 'Father Time' Gagne to pin me if I thought the title was on the line?"

"Remember, I dominated the entire match. Then Gagne hit me with a foreign object and I dropped for a second. I could have kicked out if I wanted, but I figured what the hell—no title to lose, I can live with a pin. It's much better to give Gagne a ray of hope. It makes it that much more satisfying to trounce him when the belt *really* is on the line."

"Hennig is a sick boy," says Gagne. "He tried desperately to kick out of the pin. He genuinely thought he lost his title. He flipped out. Look, it's hard enough to beat the slime. He either has outside help or he disqualifies himself. To finally pin him and not get the title is a crime. Someone is going to pay, and that someone is Curt Hennig!" □

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The telephone wires sizzle every month as two top wrestlers voice their rage and hostility toward each other. This is the unedited transcript of their conversation, your chance to see the raw emotion that results when two antagonists face off ... One on One

ONE ON ONE



"You're gonna have to turn it up higher than you ever have before if you're gonna keep me away from that title."

—Sting

IT ALL STARTED innocently enough. Barry Windham had run into the ring to save Lex Luger from an attack by Ric Flair and The Four Horsemen during a January match in Richmond, Virginia. Windham found himself outmatched by the Horsemen, and Sting and several other fan favorites had to clear the ring.

From these modest beginnings sprouted one of the NWA's hottest feuds. Less than a month later, Sting and Flair were at each other's throats after Sting crashed a party honoring the NWA World champion during a card in Raleigh, North Carolina. Sting challenged Flair to get into the ring and wrestle him. An angry J.J. Dillon climbed on the ring apron and told Sting to mind his manners. "The champ is being honored," said Dillon.

Heated words were exchanged and J.J. tossed his glass of champagne in Sting's face. Sting pulled Dillon into the ring, but was attacked by the Horsemen. After Sting escaped to the dressing room, Flair challenged him to a series of matches.

On February 14, the rivalry began in earnest at The Omni in Atlanta. Sting bloodied Flair's head on the ringpost and later had the champion pinned. But referee Tommy Young had been knocked out in a collision, giving Dillon time to run into the ring and hit Sting with his shoe. Dillon put Flair on

top of Sting and Young woke up in time to count the pin.

At press time, Flair and Sting were scheduled to meet again in a one-hour time limit match with three judges at ringside as part of WTBS' live March 27 NWA broadcast. It promised to be the high point of their feud, but it certainly won't be the last time they meet. With this in mind, Sting and Flair were brought together by *Inside Wrestling* to air their differences ... "One on One."

STING:

I'm not sure why they wanted me to talk to you, Flair. When you get right down to it, we don't have anything to talk about. I just wanna beat your butt and you want to keep away from me for as long as possible.

RIC FLAIR:

Get off it, you young punk. You

just remember who challenged who. I demanded a match against you because I wanted to prove once and for all that I'm the *real* World champion. Nobody crashes my party, nobody tries to douse my fire, without paying the price. You made the biggest mistake of your life when you tried to ruin my party in Raleigh.

S: Stop looking at yourself in the mirror, Flair. You know, I know, and the *world* knows, that the only reason you asked for those matches against me is because you were embarrassed in front of all those people and all your so-called friends. You had to save face, and the only way you could do it was by challenging me. But look what's happened so far: I had you beaten in Atlanta, but the referee was unconscious. Okay, so you got a lucky break, but then

N ONE



"You just run into the ring like a young know-it-all, and that's why you're gonna get your butt kicked."

—Ric Flair

that coward Dillon couldn't keep his greasy little fingers out of trouble. You were lucky then, Flair, but you're not gonna get lucky on the 27th, and you're never gonna get lucky again.

RF: Lucky? Let me tell you something, punk, you don't win five World championships on luck. I've got this belt around my waist, and it's not there because J.J. Dillon's helping me or because *anybody's* helping me. It's because plenty of pretenders to my throne, just like yourself, have come and gone. They've all whistled the same tune. They've all said how they're gonna beat me, but nobody could do it. Look at [Ronnie] Garvin. He got lucky and beat me once, then he ran away and hid for a month. And you know what happened when he came back? He discovered that I

was madder than ever, that I was ready for anything he could throw at me. You might be able to beat me once, boy, but you'll never get lucky twice.

S: It's not luck, Flair, because I'm not like anybody you've wrestled before. I'm . . .

RF: Stupid, arrogant, untalented, and certainly not ready to beat a *real* man like me.

S: Shut up, Flair, and don't you ever interrupt me again or I'll stuff that belt of yours so far down your throat that they're gonna have to turn you upside down to give me the strap. You call *me* stupid? Well, I'm stupid enough to get as many title shots against you as I want. Arrogant? That's not arrogance, Flair, it's *confidence*. Untalented? You've said yourself that I'm one of the best wrestlers you've ever seen. Not

ready to beat you? I've already pinned you once, and it's gonna happen again.

RF: You know, Sting, you sound like [Lex] Luger. He's another guy who was gonna beat me for the title, he was another one of these young musclemen punks who thought he could get by on power alone, without taking into account the brains and ability it takes to be a champion. Where's Luger now? The only time I ever see him is in tag team matches with Dusty Rhodes. The guy's been relegated to tag teams already! And how about Windham? He took me to the limit a bunch of times, but he could *never* go over the top. I do what I have to do to win, Sting, and nothing more. Remember that. Just when you think you have me beaten, I'll turn it up a notch. And then I'll *keep* on turning it up. *Who!*

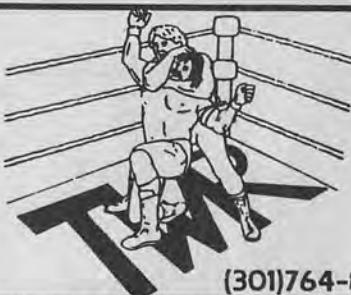
S: Maybe so, but you're gonna have to turn it up higher than you ever have before if you're gonna keep *me* away from that title. And while you're at it, maybe you should invite Anderson and Blanchard to ringside. You're gonna need 'em, Flair, because I don't plan to just *beat* you. I plan to put an end to the Ric Flair myth.

RF: The Ric Flair *myth*? Fancy words, mister, but what you're lookin' at ain't no myth. You talk to *all* my ladies out there. They'll tell you that what I got isn't a myth. Go tell Garvin and Rhodes about the Ric Flair myth. Anybody who knows *anything* will tell you that I am the greatest wrestler in this sport. That's one of your problems, Sting. Most of my opponents have a healthy respect for me. You just run into the ring like a young know-it-all, and that's why you're gonna get your butt kicked. You know, boy, a healthy respect for greatness never hurt anybody. You should think about that. You're writing your own obituary.

S: We'll see about that, but you're going down. You're the past, Flair. Get ready for the future. Your future. *Without* the title. □

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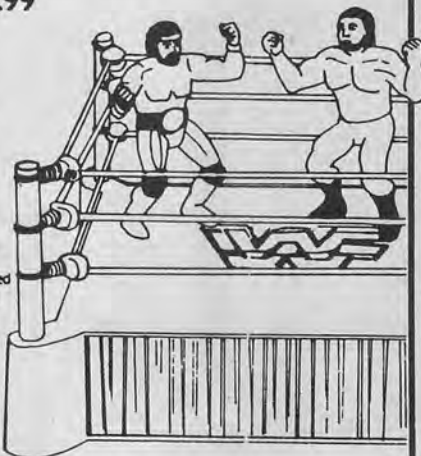
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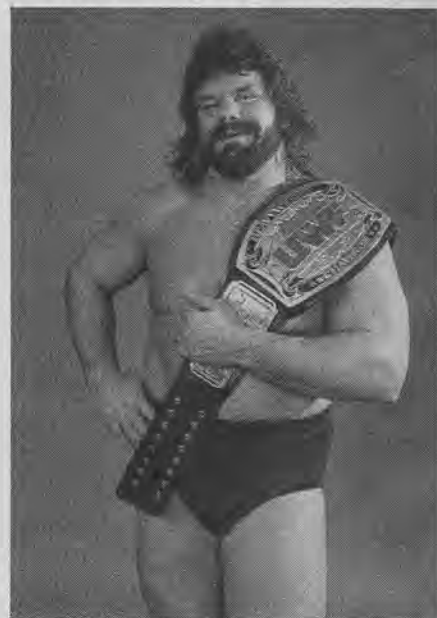
SINCERELY YOURS

(Continued from page 6)

RIPPED OFF

Until reading your April 1988 issue, I had a great deal of respect for Jim Crockett Jr.

First, he destroyed the Florida area, and then he did the same to the UWF. Now I can't believe Crockett dissolved the UWF heavyweight and tag team



Steve Williams is a fine wrestler who had the UWF title unfairly taken from him by promoter Jim Crockett. Crockett deserves a thumbs down, writes Forrest Briggs.

titles! The Shepherders and Steve Williams have every right to take out their hostilities on people like Barry Windham and The Rock 'n' Roll Express. If Windham or the Express had the titles, I don't think this situation would be taking place. Williams and The Shepherders worked hard to get where they are and deserve better treatment. Thumbs down to Jim Crockett Jr.

FORREST BRIGGS
Charleston, SC

BAM BAM BUST

Your article "Bam Bam Bigelow: Wrestling's Most Dangerous Man!" (March 1988) was totally ridiculous. I can name at least half a dozen other men who can run rings around this ham-and-egger. So he beat Hercules Hernandez—*whoopee!* He hasn't been on top of his game plan since he came to the WWF.



Bam Bam Bigelow may be able to beat Hercules Hernandez, but that still doesn't mean he's capable of winning a world championship, writes Bill Walkowitz.

The article said Bigelow has the strength of Hulk Hogan. Give me a break, will you? It's highly doubtful he's as strong as Hogan. I'm not a fan of Hogan's, but I'd bet on any given day he could beat Bigelow in a test of strength.

You think that Oliver Humperdink was a good choice for a manager? Ha! Humperdink packed his bags and ran out of Florida before Kevin Sullivan could give him what he always had coming—a good beating.

BILL WALKOWITZ
Chicago

PRESIDENTIAL COPOUT

I was watching wrestling on Sunday, January 24—the night of the Royal Rumble—when Hulk Hogan and Andre the Giant signed the contract for their Indianapolis title match and Andre slammed Hogan's head into the table. When WWF President Jack Tunney ran from the stage like a scared rabbit, I finally understood exactly why Bobby "The Brain" Heenan and his animals can get away with anything. What the WWF needs is a president who will stand up to these wrestlers and levy the suspensions and fines that are needed to stop some of the things that are going on.

(Continued on page 50)

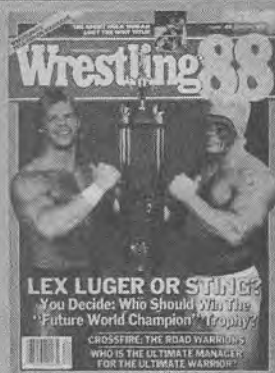
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SINCERELY YOURS

(Continued from page 49)

Some examples of what Tunney has done wrong:

● When The Islanders stole The British Bulldogs' pet, Matilda, they were only suspended until the dog was found—and they didn't even have to return it themselves.

● When Andre choked Hogan while his back was turned, he was given a contract. If this is what wrestling is all about, I think it's a shame.

I hope you can help clean up wrestling, so that when children watch the sport they don't grow up thinking that, just because you're a wrestler, you can get away with anything next to murder.

M. GARLOCK
Mt. Vernon, PA

LESS HORSEPOWER

It's obvious to me that James J. Dillon and his fellow Horsemen are not the unit they were with Lex Luger. The Horsemen say they aren't affected by the loss of Luger. They say Luger was a weak link who couldn't do his part to be a Horseman. But let's face



Lex Luger socks Ric Flair in the gut. In reader Justin Bumgardner's opinion, The Four Horsemen haven't been the same team since Luger walked out on them.

it, when they're in the ring, they're not as dominant. Not only have they lost a wrestler, they have one more wrestler against them.

Arn Anderson says he will singlehandedly take out Luger. If he tries to take out Luger alone, he will get himself up in Luger's human torture rack—his backbreaker. After the match, the other Horsemen will have to pry him from the ring. Deep inside, Anderson knows this, so he's going to bring Ric Flair and Tully Blanchard to help him, since Luger is already friends with Dusty Rhodes and Barry Windham.

The Horsemen really have been a less dominant force without Luger. Lately they have been looking for a new member. They asked Windham, of all people, to be a Horseman. To no one's surprise, Barry declined—then leveled Flair.

In the future, the Horsemen will continue to look for a new member. And when they finally get one, the Horsemen will ride again!

JUSTIN BUMGARDNER
Guthrie, OK ☐

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THE INSIDER

(Continued from page 18)

bombarded by the kind of hate mail I thought only presidential assassins and sinning TV ministers received:

If you are ever in Mole Hill, North Carolina, and I see your ugly mug in the street, I will kick it so it looks just like your ugly butt. They probably look alike anyway, but I'll still kick it for good measure. Ricky and Robert are the two greatest, most wonderful men on earth, and you're just jealous you're not them.

And ...

Charlotte to speak to them. Rather than granting an interview, they hand reporters mimeographed fact sheets listing their favorite foods, restaurants, nightclubs, and cars. A spokesman says they update them every two weeks, so in case they change their minds, their fans have the very latest information.

I left Charlotte vindicated. Obviously, the Express are the morons I always thought they were. Nevertheless, the mail poured in and the death threats continued.



Ellner, I'm coming up to New York with a .44 Magnum and your picture. I've already shot a hole through the picture. Wanna guess what my next move is?

And ...

My room is a shrine. Ricky Morton and Robert Gibson fill it. It is a Rock 'n' Roll Express church. You defile my sanctuary. You are the devil. Your number is 666. God will strike you dead. I hope it is slow and painful.

You'd think, by the reaction, I was knocking someone worthy—a substantial national figure like Elvis—instead of a pair of pandering twits like Morton and Gibson. The mail rolled in as the popularity of the Express soared. I reconsidered. Am I missing the boat, I wondered? Is there something of substance to these two? I flew to

The Midnight Rockers drape Rick Morton over the ropes. Ellner feels vindicated in his contempt for The Rock 'n' Roll Express ever since they left the NWA and started feuding with the Rockers, a team that tried to emulate Morton and Gibson.

Now I ask all you potential murderers: Where is your beloved Rock 'n' Roll Express today? Do they hold the World belts? Are they rated in the top five? Not quite. The top 10? Barely.

The truth, dear idiot worshipers, is that the objects of your collective affection are languishing in Memphis after an unsuccessful run at the second biggest set of bums in the wrestling world, The Midnight Rockers. They can't even beat a team whose very intent was to imitate their own success!

The sound you hear is that of one man gloating. □

ON ASSIGNMENT

(Continued from page 20)



Luger does some pushups to get pumped up for his photo session. The rookie Luger and the Luger of today, Hunter reports, are practically two different people.

had trouble recognizing himself—could he spot any similarities between the humble, unassuming rookie and today's arrogant self-anointed complete package?

"That was a boy talking, Liz," he replied. "A boy with a boy's understanding of his capabilities. What's humility? The capacity to accept limits. If I say I am the greatest, then I better be equipped to back it up. And I am. I am, indeed, 'The Total Package.'"

"Are there similarities between me then and now? Absolutely! Humble as I was, I was still looking toward the NWA title. Even as a rookie I knew my destiny. And now, a short time later, I am ready to fulfill that destiny."

Sting, on the other hand, is a much tougher interview. Though he's been touted as one of the handful of serious contenders for Ric Flair's NWA crown, he remains low-key and modest.

"I'd rather my actions speak for themselves," he says. "What works for Lex may not work for me."

Arrogance isn't Sting's style. But who can predict the future? Would Sting be as quiet with the NWA title belt around his waist?

"He'd be the same," says television analyst Tony Schiavone. "Sting is not Lex Luger. Face it. There is only one Lex Luger."

You can't fool Tony Schiavone. He is absolutely correct: Sting is *not* Lex Luger. But he is after the same prize Luger is. The current issue of our sister publication *Wrestling 88*, in fact, features Luger and Sting on the cover (taken that day in the office). Between them they are holding a large trophy that will eventually go to the man the readers choose as the "Future World Champion."

The two men profess to be friends. They work out together, share meals, and occasionally socialize. But the quest for the greatest individual prize in professional wrestling is no place for a friendship to flourish. One man is quiet, the other brash. Both are young and powerful, governed by an intensity few competitors can claim.

All I know is that when an irresistible force meets an immovable object, I want to be there for the collision. □

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ROCK 'N' ROLL EXPRESS

(Continued from page 31)



Robert Gibson crunches Arn Anderson and Tully Blanchard's heads together (above) and executes a headscissors on Bobby Eaton (below). Morton and Gibson have said they may go after the "Original" Midnight Express of Dennis Condrey and Randy Rose.



provided.

All petitions received will be forwarded to the NWA. Copies will also be sent to Morton and Gibson. If fan response is overwhelming enough, your influence could bring the Rock 'n' Rolls back to the NWA. But act quickly—there's no time to waste! Remember, there's power in numbers!

Meanwhile, controversy continues to rage over why the Express left in the first place. NWA promoter Jim Crockett refuses to comment on the situation. "This matter is still in limbo and it would not be fair to comment publicly,"

Crockett said. "At this time, however, it would be fair to say that the Rock 'n' Rolls and the NWA reached a decision that it was necessary to part ways."

Morton and Gibson are also evasive. "We're here [in the CWA] and that's all that matters for now," said Morton. "Certainly, we miss our fans in the NWA, but there are great fans here in the CWA, too. We're also very concerned at this point over the AWA tag team title situation. We feel that we were robbed, and this matter must be straightened out before we start thinking about going somewhere else."

The situation Morton is referring to occurred on February 15 in Memphis. While referee Jerry Calhoun was knocked out, Morton had Shawn Michaels in a pin position. Frank Morell, a referee posted at ringside, immediately entered the ring to make the count. Meanwhile, Calhoun woke up and saw Marty Jannetty pinning Gibson—with Jannetty's feet on the ropes! Both referees made their counts at the same time, so promoter Eddie Marlin ordered a rematch.

If Morton and Gibson win the belts, the odds of them returning to the NWA are slimmer than ever. Still, the Express have never made a secret of their love for the fans.

"We wouldn't be where we are today if not for those fans," said Gibson. "They've made us a success and we owe a lot to them. I just hope they understand that there's some things a man has to do. Ricky and I reached this decision together, and we're going to have to go through with it." And then, he added with a smile: "But that doesn't mean we can't be persuaded to return."

In other words, it could be up to you. ☐

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 March 1984/Starrcade '83, Closeups on Atlanta and Dallas cards.
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RANDY SAVAGE

(Continued from page 35)



Honky Tonk's control of Savage is surprising because Savage is a much better technical wrestler.

and Mr. Fuji, ducked Fred Blassie and Jimmy Hart, and shocked the wrestling world by selecting Elizabeth as his manager, a crafty businesswoman with unproven experience in the sport.

If nothing else, it was a masterstroke of public relations. What a combination! Savage, a brawny madman, the embodiment of masculinity, paired with the frail, tender Elizabeth, a woman whose beauty was exceeded only by her vulnerability. Fans instantly fell in love.

And Savage, a ruthless rule-breaker since his WWF debut, began to find himself the recipient of the crowd's favor. In his classic series of title bouts against Hulk Hogan, Savage enjoyed a small—but loyal—backing.

Elizabeth proved to be a competent, and something of a ruthless, administrator herself. One promoter remembers negotiating a contract with Elizabeth soon after

she joined Savage. "Not that we were trying to take advantage of her," the promoter recalls, "but we did want to sign Savage at a fairly low price. Even back then he commanded top dollar, and we wanted to cut a few corners."

"Elizabeth, without ever raising her voice, somehow managed to get Savage twice what he normally would. It's like we became enchanted by her. We agreed to everything she said."

Elizabeth had other tools besides her smile. She organized Savage's bookings, had his home cleaned, arranged his car payments—streamlined his life so he could concentrate on training and strategy. When Hogan proved too formidable, Savage quickly grabbed the Intercontinental title as consolation.

Now, well over a year removed from his WWF title run, no longer the I-C champion, Randy Savage has toned down his ambitions. Where once he strode imperiously into the ring ahead of Elizabeth, pausing only for her to catch up and open the ring ropes for him, Savage now walks alongside his manager. He opens the ropes for her. During his matches, he keeps one eye on his opponent while the other (not-so-menacing) eye looks protectively at Elizabeth.

Savage's concern for Elizabeth's safety has led him astray, as far from his championship goals as he was in Memphis, when he was mismanaging his own affairs. Says one disgruntled Savage supporter, "If he's so darn worried about Elizabeth, why doesn't he just leave her in the dressing room? She's gonna wind up costing him his career."

To that sentiment Savage would no doubt reply: What good is it to have a beautiful woman if you can't flaunt her? The only response to that is: What good is it to have a beautiful woman if your career slowly fizzles down the sewer?



Honky Tonk claims victory as Savage is tied up in the ropes. Elizabeth's detractors say that she has become too much of a distraction for the "Macho Man."

"Savage is not the same wrestler he was 18 months ago," says one ring watchbird. "Elizabeth's housebroken him. He's been tamed. He's too preoccupied with what Elizabeth wants. He should remember that Elizabeth *wants* him to be champion. She's no fool. She didn't join up so he could wrestle The Honky Tonk Man every week, and Savage's failure to win the I-C belt from that no-talent champion only proves that he's been weakened by her. Savage is allowing precious time and skills to erode, and he has only himself—and his obsession with Elizabeth—to blame."

"Who ever would have thought he'd be sitting at the same table as Hulk Hogan? We owe it all to Elizabeth. But Savage needs to regain the edge that made him crazy, that made him the tough contender to Hogan, that made him I-C champ."

Can a sane man, softened by the devotion of a beautiful woman, roar again?

For Randy Savage, recapturing the beast within his own soul may represent the difference between realizing his career goals and a lifetime of misery. ☐

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ROAD WARRIOR ANIMAL

(Continued from page 37)



tration of how brutal the scene became.

The resulting injuries were massive. Animal required hours of delicate microsurgery to reconstruct the bone structure surrounding his left eye socket. It was necessary for doctors to graft bone and cartilage from his nose to the eye socket to complete the operation. "If Warlord had continued for 30 more seconds," said one of the doctors, "Animal's eye would have popped out completely." As it was, the damage was caused when the eye popped a quarter-inch out of the socket and snapped back again—the direct result of the force of the impact of



Animal's time for revenge came at Long Island's Nassau Coliseum. Paul Ellering was substituting for Animal, but the Warrior couldn't stay out of action for long. At the first sign of trouble, Animal ran into the ring to take his anger out on The Warlord (top and above).

forth, Ivan Koloff, whose reason for being at ringside is still uncertain, flung a box of chalk dust in Hawk's face.

Warlord grabbed Animal and smashed his head into the weights. The crash of bone and iron brought groans of horror from the crowd. Warlord would not stop. Although the Warrior vehemently denies it, a ringside fan claims he heard Animal beg for mercy. Many fans left the arena immediately, a further illus-

head against steel weight.

It will be months before Animal completely recovers, and doctors are pessimistic whether his eyesight will ever be fully restored.

Apparently, however, those implications are too staggering for Animal to bear. Against strict orders to stay away from the ring, Animal recently proved his fury is sincere. During a \$50,000 ladder match at Long Island's Nassau Coliseum, the

(Continued on page 60)

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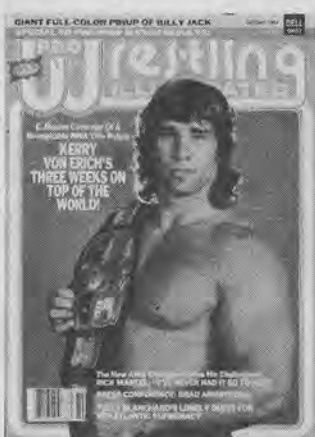
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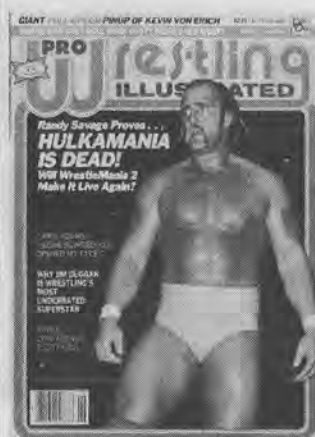
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ROAD WARRIOR

(Continued from page 58)

combination of Ellering and Hawk were losing badly to Barbarian and Warlord. As the makeshift Warrior team lay beaten and battered, Jones began climbing after the money. Animal, wearing sunglasses over the patch that covered his injured eye, stormed the ring.

His appearance inspired his teammates. Hawk and Animal used the 12-foot ladder for a spectacular clothesline against Warlord and Barbarian. The Warriors sent Jones and his men scampering from the ring to the dressing room, enabling Ellering to gather the cash.

But even that early piece of revenge didn't satiate the Warriors' anger very much.

"When I think of what they did to my blood brother," Hawk says, "I can hardly take it. When I saw him in the hospital with that patch over his eye, I didn't know whether to cry or kill."

Animal has chosen the latter course. "I feel better now than ever before," he says. "Now I'm free to follow my destructive impulses. Before, Hawk and I were always careful not to kill anyone. Sometimes, in the heat of battle, we'd have situations where our opponents stopped breathing momentarily. We'd have to check ourselves, hold back a little, since most wrestlers can't take the Legion of Doom's full force.

"No way against Warlord and Konga. I get all pumped just thinking of walking into the ring and seeing them on the other side. Do you understand what it is to know a man meant to kill you?"

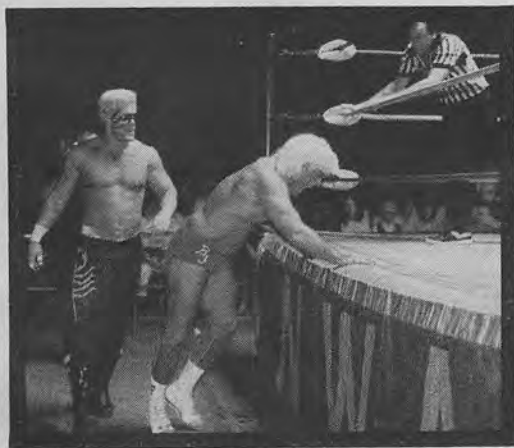
"The sucker tried to *kill* me," said Animal, still finding the fact hard to digest. "Hell, he almost blinded me. I couldn't wait around and let him do it to my teammates. Forget motivation. To hell with revenge. *Let's talk funerals.*"

Don't you love it when the Road Warriors get introspective? ☐

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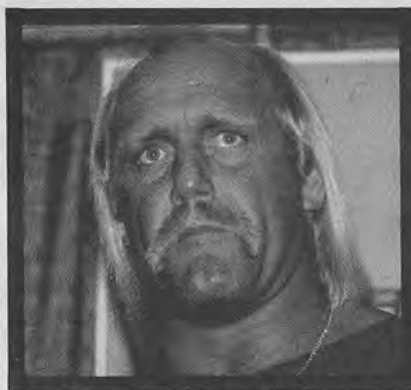
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DRESSING ROOM DOOR

(Continued from page 10)

part on their disastrous [Bunkhouse Stampede] pay-per-view event. Their [live] show on WTBS will have no impact on our pay-per-view penetration for *WrestleMania IV*, although I don't think it was a very smart decision on their part."

McMahon punctuated that last statement with a smile, because he knows the lofty position the WWF has established for itself in professional wrestling. One look around the Grand Hyatt ballroom said it all. There were close to 300 people present for the press conference, which featured the top stars of *WrestleMania IV* (Hogan, Andre, DiBiase, Virgil, and Bobby Heenan) and a taped message from Donald Trump (real estate tycoon, owner of the Grand Hyatt, and host of *WrestleMania IV* in Atlantic City); it attracted leading media personnel from around the tri-state area. His enemies say McMahon is crass, but everything he does is of a first-class nature.

Even the WWF's *quality* of wrestling, constantly under fire from rival promoters and fans of the *sport* of professional wrestling, holds up pretty well under close examination. For pure wrestling ability—and that means knowledge of the sweet science, aerial skills, stamina, and ring smarts—the top wrestlers in the WWF compare favorably to any other federation.

I would say that the most skilled individual wrestlers in the NWA are Ric Flair, Barry Windham, and Sting. The best tag teams are The Midnight Express and The Road Warriors. Throw out Flair (he's in a class by himself), and the WWF's masters—Rick Steamboat, Randy Savage, Ted DiBiase, Greg Valentine, Bam Bam Bigelow, The Hart Foundation, and Strike Force—

are every bit the equal of the NWA stars. Indeed, wrestling in its purest state still exists in the WWF. It's just clouded over by the circus animals, the muscular brawlers who can't do anything but flex, and jerks like Brutus Beefcake, who's allowed to bring pruning shears into the ring.



Vince McMahon's style of wrestling promotion has its supporters and detractors.

But that's just another aspect of the WWF that sets it apart. Every other federation depends primarily on pure wrestling to bring fans to the arena, thereby limiting their audience. McMahon has expanded his audience into other areas; his shows appeal to a wide variety of individual tastes. In a way, Mc-

Mahon has taken a cue from, of all people, William Shakespeare.

That may sound incredibly stupid, but the similarities are overwhelming. Sure, McMahon has never done anything to rival Shakespeare's great works, but he follows a similar pattern: Shakespeare's plays had something for everyone, from the lowly beggar to richest man in the land, from the uneducated to the intellectual.

A WWF show can have solid wrestling (Savage vs. Steamboat at WrestleMania III) for the hardcore fan, an exciting, bigger-than-life character (Hulk Hogan) for the younger fans, sex symbols (Rick Rude, The Ultimate Warrior) for the female fan, and comedy (Jesse Ventura's commentary) for the average viewer.

McMahon doesn't try to satisfy all of the people all of the time. He just tries to satisfy all of the people some of the time, and not necessarily all at the same time.

Some facts: Over 33 million viewers, the largest audience ever for a wrestling telecast in the United States, watched *Main Event* February 5 on NBC. The WWF brought wrestling back to prime-time network TV. WrestleMania was the largest event ever on closed-circuit TV in the U.S. before WrestleMania II, then WrestleMania III broke all the records. Those records will likely get broken again at WrestleMania IV.

Of course, just because more people watch doesn't make something better. TV programs and Top 40 music appeal to the lowest common denominator while often sacrificing quality. I'm not saying the WWF offers better wrestling than the other federations, but McMahon has become a rich man and the WWF has become a huge business by changing the rules of wrestling promotion.

Go ahead and argue with him. ☐

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BEST OF THE WRESTLER

Now known as *Wrestler Annual*, each issue is jam-packed with history in a look back at early issues of the sport's longest-running magazine.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Summer 1980 | <input type="checkbox"/> Summer 1981 | <input type="checkbox"/> Fall 1982 | <input type="checkbox"/> Summer 1983 |

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A ground-breaking title in the early 1970s, the Ben Strong magazines are still coveted by collectors the world over.

- ☐ November 1973

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Dynamic writing and peak-action photography have made these popular yearbooks the hallmark of any wrestling magazine collection.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> 1975 Yearbook #12 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1976 Yearbook #17 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1978 Yearbook Summer | <input type="checkbox"/> 1979 Yearbook December |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1975 Yearbook #13 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1977 Yearbook Spring | <input type="checkbox"/> 1978 Yearbook Fall | <input type="checkbox"/> 1979 Yearbook Winter |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> 1974 Annual #8 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1976 Annual #16 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1978 Annual Summer | <input type="checkbox"/> 1980 Annual January |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1974 Annual #9 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1976 Annual #17 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1978 Annual Fall | <input type="checkbox"/> 1980 Annual Summer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1974 Annual #10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1977 Annual #18 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1978 Annual Winter | |
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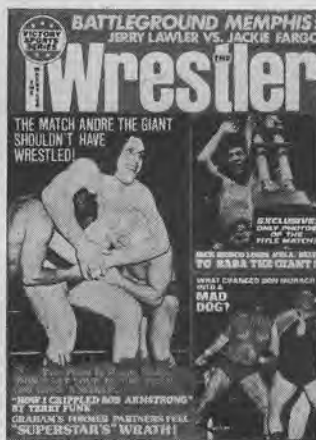
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THE Wrestler

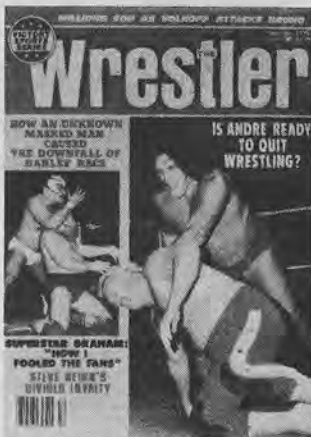
Don't miss a single issue of the magazine that has thrilled wrestling fans for two generations, **THE WRESTLER**. Complete your collection of the most respected wrestling publication in the world today. Supplies are limited. Don't delay—order today!



JUNE 1975

June 1975/Stories include: Andre, Muraco, Funk, Lawler.
August 1975/Stories include: Sammartino, Patterson, Stasiak, Rivera.
December 1975/Stories include: Mascaras, Rhodes, McDaniel, Blackjacks.
February 1976/Stories include: Andre, Sammartino, Rhodes, Valentine.
July 1976/Stories include: Andre, Wrestling II, Inoki, Von Erich.
November 1976/Stories include: Sammartino, Andre, Valentine, Mosca.
December 1976/Stories include: Von Erich, Mulligan, Brody, Funk.
January 1977/Stories include: Brody, Andre, Wrestling II, Mascaras.
February 1977/Stories include: Sammartino, Jones, Funk, Von Raschke.
April 1977/Stories include: Sammartino, Funk, Bockwinkel.
May 1977/Stories include: Mascaras, Valliants, Andersons, Sammartino.
June 1977/Stories include: Patera, Putski, Hernandez, McDaniel.
July 1977/Stories include: Backlund, Rhodes, Rocca, Mascaras.
October 1977/Stories include: Rhodes, Sammartino, Flair, Snuka.
November 1977/Stories include: Sammartino, Slater, Mascaras, Snuka.
September 1978/Stories include: Rhodes, Grahams, Andre, Mascaras.
October 1978/Stories include: Sammartino, Backlund, McDaniel, Race.
November 1978/Stories include: Flair, Andre, Ladd, Graham.
December 1978/Stories include: Brisco, Mulligan, Andre, Blanchard.

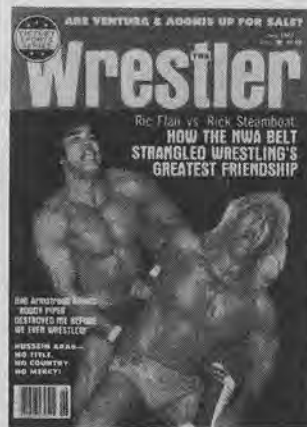
February 1979/Stories include: Ladd, Flair, Idol, Heenan.
May 1979/Stories include: Steamboat, Brody, Valliants, Race.
July 1979/Stories include: Wrestling II, Backlund, Sammartino, Andre.
August 1979/Stories include: Bockwinkel, Patera, Stevens, Superstar.
September 1979/Stories include: Superstar Graham, Cyclone Negro, Greg Gagne, Mil Mascaras.
October 1979/Stories include: Flair, Valentine, Santana, Muraco.



DECEMBER 1979

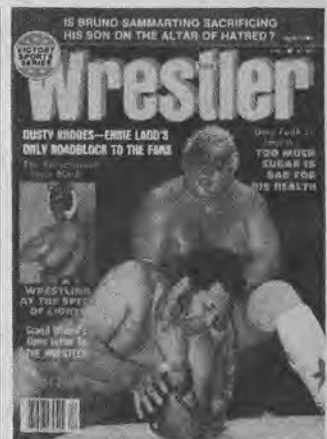
December 1979/Stories include: Andre, Graham, Rhodes, Mascaras.
January 1980/Stories include: Race, Backlund, Snuka, Brisco.
February 1980/Stories include: Andre, Flair, DiBiase, Superstar.
March 1980/Stories include: Sammartino, Murdoch, Mulligan, Andre.
April 1980/Stories include: Rhodes, DiBiase, Youngblood, Wrestling II.
May 1980/Stories include: Andre, Mascaras, Bockwinkel, Patera.
June 1980/Stories include: Backlund, Abdullah, Brisco, Flair.
August 1980/Stories include: Valentine, Zbyszko, Von Erich, Albano.
September 1980/Stories include: Ladd, Patera, Steamboat, Gagne.
October 1980/Stories include: Patera, Rhodes, Wrestling II, Morales.
January 1981/Stories include: Valentine, Rhodes, Patera, Von Erich.
February 1981/Stories include: Zbyszko, Patera, Iron Sheik, Wrestling II.

March 1981/Stories include: Rich, Samoans, Blassie, Wrestling II.
May 1981/Stories include: Backlund, Rhodes, DiBiase, Moondogs.
June 1981/Stories include: Sammartino, Piper, Rich, Martel.
July 1981/Stories include: Backlund, Rhodes, Flair, Atlas.
August 1981/Stories include: DiBiase, Slaughter, Martel, Idol.
October 1981/Stories include: Funks, Rhodes, Race, Sullivan.
January 1982/Stories include: Rich, Steamboat, Sullivan, Sammartino.
March 1982/Stories include: Slaughter, Albano, Flair, Race.
April 1982/Stories include: Brisco, Armstrongs, Valentine, Santana.
May 1982/Stories include: Backlund, Von Erich, Graham, Rich.



JUNE 1982

June 1982/Stories include: Steamboat, Reed, Albano, Piper.
July 1982/Stories include: Rich, Sawyer, Flair, Steamboat.
August 1982/Stories include: Bockwinkel, Steamboat, Mulligans, Piper.
September 1982/Stories include: Rhodes, Hogan, Armstrong, Blair.
October 1982/Stories include: Snuka, Rhodes, Santana, Piper.
November 1982/Stories include: Flair, Snuka, Piper, Blair.
December 1982/Stories include: Snuka, Rich, Kamala, Junkyard Dog.
January 1983/Stories include: Putski, Muraco, Windham, Bockwinkel.
February 1983/Stories include: Bockwinkel, Backlund, Rich, Kamala.



APRIL 1983

April 1983/Stories include: Rhodes, Tiger Mask, Sammartino, Bundy.
May 1983/Stories include: Samoans, Von Erich, Rhodes, Orndorff.
June 1983/Stories include: Windham, Martel, Brody, Andre.
July 1983/Stories include: Flair, Adonis, Sullivan, Zbyszko.
August 1983/Stories include: Valentine, Blanchard, Windham, Street.
September 1983/Stories include: Hogan, Ellering, Von Erich, Briscos.
October 1983/Stories include: Race, Sawyer, Briscos, Bass.
November 1983/Stories include: Rhodes, Santana, Von Erichs, Kabuki.



NOVEMBER 1983

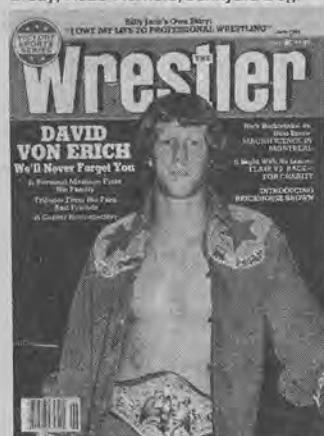
December 1983/Stories include: Mas-
caras, Superstar, Von Erich, Zbyszko.

January 1984/Stories include: Valen-
tine, Hogan, Von Erich, Road Warriors.

March 1984/Stories include: Santana,
Hogan, Von Erich, Sawyers.

April 1984/Stories include: Hogan, Eller-
ing, Von Erich, Rhodes.

May 1984/Stories include: Windham,
Brody, Road Warriors, Junkyard Dog.



JUNE 1984

June 1984/Stories include: Von Erich,
Billy Jack, Flair, Armstrong.

July 1984/Stories include: Rich, Billy
Jack, Valiant, Von Erich.

August 1984/Stories include: Garvin,
Sullivan, Freebirds, Street.

September 1984/Stories include: Von
Erich, Piper, Steamboat, Billy Jack.

October 1984/Stories include: Flair,
Rhodes, Magnum T.A., Bundy.

November 1984/Stories include: Billy
Jack, Von Erich, Piper, Brody.

December 1984/Stories include: Martel,
Santana, Von Erich, Steamboat.

January 1985/Stories include: Von
Erich, Warriors, Albano, Koloff.

February 1985/Stories include: War-
riors, Santana, Billy Jack, Nikita Koloff.

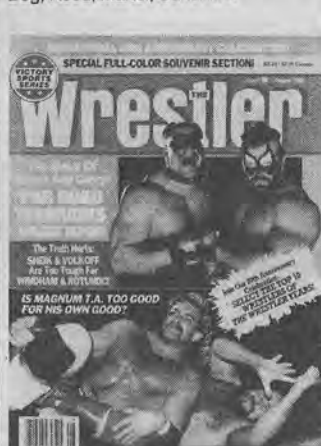
March 1985/Stories include: Slaughter,
Warriors, Martel, Rude.

April 1985/Stories include: Warriors,
Von Erich-Adams, Flair, Tonga & Snuka.

May 1985/Stories include: Warriors,
Backlund, Santana, Rich.

June 1985/Stories include: Rhodes,
Windham, Rich, Hogan.

July 1985/Stories include: Junkyard
Dog, Reed, Martel, Sunshine.



AUGUST 1985

**August 1985/BONUS 4-PG. COLOR
SECTION!** Plus: Warriors, Magnum T.A.,
Sheik & Volkoff, McGraw.

September 1985/Stories include: Ho-
gan, Von Erich, Savage, R&R Express.

October 1985/Stories include: Flair,
Windham, Shultz, Martel.

November 1985/Stories include: Ho-
gan, Zbyszko, R&R Express, Von Erichs.

December 1985/Stories include: Rude,
Fantastics, Muraco, Uncle Elmer.

January 1986/20th Anniversary Issue!
10 Greatest Wrestlers, Rhodes, Hogan,
Sammartino.

February 1986/Stories include: Hogan,
Orndorff, Flair, Hansen.

March 1986/Stories include: Von Erich,
Duggan, Hansen-Martel.

April 1986/Stories include: Von Erich,
Rude, Luger, Hogan, Magnum T.A.

May 1986/Stories include: Zbyszko, Von
Erichs, Santana-Ventura, Hillbillies.

June 1986/Stories include: Luger, Her-
nandez, Flair-Bockwinkel, Hogan, T.A.

July 1986/Stories include: King Kong
Bundy, Koloff vs. Graham, Ric Flair.

August 1986/Stories include: Snuka,
Bulldogs, Freebirds, Warriors, Duggan.

September 1986/Stories include: Fan-
tastics, Adonis, Morton-Flair, Brody.

October 1986/Stories include: Nikita-
Magnum, Nord, Bruno, Kerry, Windham.

November 1986/Stories include: R&R
Express, Hogan-Orndorff, Von Erich.

December 1986/Stories include: Flair,
Bockwinkel, Hogan, Gilbert, Nikita.

January 1987/Stories include: Heenan,
Garvins, DiBiase, Borne & Sawyer.

February 1987/Stories include: Mag-
num T.A., Gordy, Steamboat-Roberts.

March 1987/Stories include: Windham,
Nikita, Adias, Savage-Steamboat.

May 1987/Stories include: Flair-Nikita,
Andre-Hogan, UWF, Windham, Hennig.

June 1987/Stories include: Flair-Wind-
ham, Can-Ams, Rhodes-Murdoch.

July 1987/Stories include: Cornette, Hy-
att, Luger, Harts, Adams, Hansen.

August 1987/Stories include: Can-Ams,
Luger vs. Nikita, Fantastics, Koko, Nord.

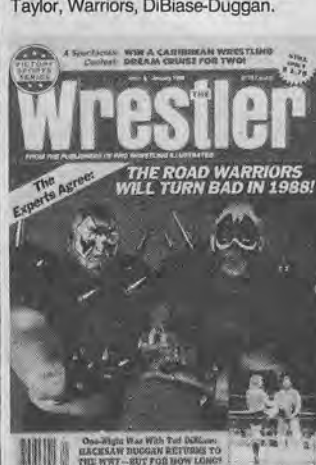
September 1987/Stories include: Ko-
loffs, Harts, Duggan, Hennig, Hart.

October 1987/Stories include: Savage-
Honky Tonk, Horsemen, Patera, Kerry.

November 1987/Stories include: Wil-
liams, Luger, Hogan-Khan, Rich.

December 1987/Stories include: Ho-
gan, Windham, Lawler, Flair, Beefcake.

January 1988/Stories include: Nikita-
Taylor, Warriors, DiBiase-Duggan.



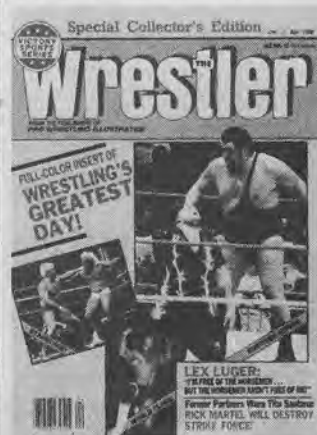
JANUARY 1988



FEBRUARY 1988

February 1988/Stories include: Flair,
Andre-Hogan, New Breed, Kerry.

March 1988/Stories include: Hogan,
Luger-Sting, Calgary, Demolition.



APRIL 1988

**April 1988/Special issue! Starrcade '87,
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**May 1988/Luger-Horsemen, Hogan,
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| <input type="checkbox"/> DEC 76 | <input type="checkbox"/> AUG 81 | <input type="checkbox"/> JAN 85 | <input type="checkbox"/> JAN 88 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> JAN 77 | <input type="checkbox"/> OCT 81 | <input type="checkbox"/> FEB 85 | <input type="checkbox"/> FEB 88 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FEB 77 | <input type="checkbox"/> JAN 82 | <input type="checkbox"/> MAR 85 | <input type="checkbox"/> MAR 88 |
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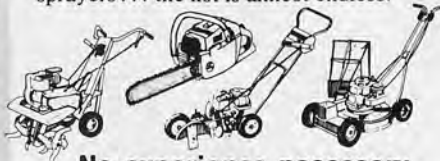
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